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Handbook of Source-Materials

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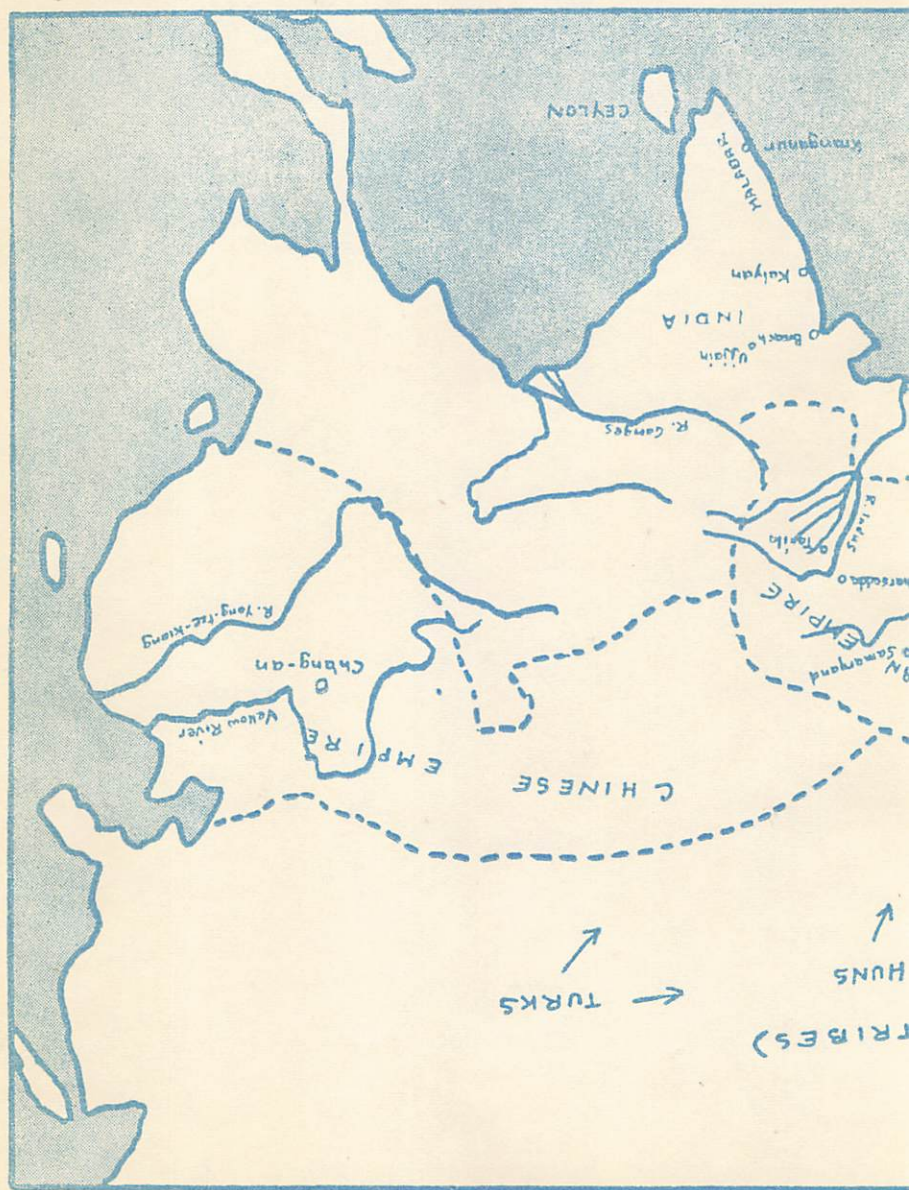
Students of Church History

William G. Young



THE WORLD OF

EARLY CHURCH



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INDIAN THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY No. 2

HANDBOOK OF SOURCE-MATERIALS FOR

Students of Church History

UP TO 650 A.D.

WILLIAM G. YOUNG

PUBLISHED FOR
THE SENATE OF SERAMPORE COLLEGE
BY
THE CHRISTIAN LITERATURE SOCIETY

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FOREWORD

Since 1954, we have published a number of theological books in the *Christian Students' Library* series. At its meeting in January 1968, the Senate of Serampore College decided to begin a new series under the title, *Indian Theological Library*. The books in this series are designed to be of use to candidates appearing for the B.D. degree examination of Serampore. It is our hope that they will also promote systematic study and theological thinking among Christian people in India.

The present volume by William G. Young is the second book to be published in the *Indian Theological Library* Series. It is a collection of source materials on Church History up to 650 A.D. Though the documents in this volume pertain to the Church as a whole during this period, special attention is given to the source materials on the history of the Church in Asia.

The history of the Church in any place and at any given time belongs to the entire Church. This does not, however, justify the fact that the study of church history in Asia itself had been mainly confined to the study of Western Church History and that the history of Christianity in Asia has been largely neglected. There are no adequate books available on Asian Christianity; the original source materials, without which study and teaching cannot be adequately undertaken, are not readily available for Asian students. Mr. Young has done a great service to Asian students in bringing together in the present volume important source materials on the history of Christianity in Asia. The book is the result of patient research and good scholarship and we are very much in his debt.

T. V. PHILIP,
General Editor.

PREFACE

THIS volume has grown. My original intention was a one-volume collection of source-materials for Asian students of Church History. I soon realised that it would not be enough to rearrange, from an Asian standpoint, the material available in English source-books; much that was relevant was not available in English at all, but in French or Latin translations. I therefore decided to limit this volume to the period up to 650 A.D., approximately the date when the Arabs conquered the Sassanid Persian Empire, and Muslim rule replaced that of Zoroastrian kings. This was a significant turning-point for the Church of the East as a whole. At that time the church in Persia meant, in control and influence, the church extending through Central Asia as far as China, and through South-East Asia as far as India and Ceylon. I hope later to prepare volumes covering the medieval and modern periods.

Some basic convictions have guided me in the collection of this source-material:

1. Asian Church History—and in fact, the history of the Universal Church—should be taught to Asian students from an Asian point of view. This was suggested, as long ago as 1938, by Professor John Foster at the Tambaram Conference.¹ In his *Church of the T'ang Dynasty*, published the following year, he pleaded again for a radical change of viewpoint:

The reorientation concerns not only the material which we present, to our students, or to our congregations, but also our own church-consciousness. Those who serve the church in the East ought to have in the foreground of their thoughts a church that was always universal, and which from the days of the Apostles onwards, was always advancing eastwards. Western Church History will then take up its rightful place as a useful, indeed an indispensable, background.²

Dr. Foster has stressed this point again and again. I need only recall, perhaps, an article published in 1954 in the *Indian Journal of Theology*.³

¹ *Tambaram Reports*, Vol. 5, pp. 258-275.

² p. vii, cf. p. 2.

³ *The Teaching of Church History in India*.

Church History must remain the history of the Universal Church. No narrow nationalism must invade and falsify, nor must our teaching be sentimentally unreal for the sake of national interest. The West is the scene of Christianity's most striking early triumphs, and repeatedly in succeeding centuries, sees movements of renewal which are to inaugurate new eastward out-reachings. It is neither a case of omitting history because it is western, nor of falsifying its proportions for the sake of the East. It is a question of what the main line of interest should be.

I have tried to follow this advice ; if in places I have given what may seem undue stress to Eastern material, it is because such material is not readily available elsewhere.

2. Asian churches, and their history, should not be treated as if they were isolated churches in isolated countries. This is true particularly in the first fifteen centuries, when the history of Christianity in Asian Churches is closely bound up together. You cannot treat the church in China, or India, or Turkestan, in isolation from that in Mesopotamia and Persia—they all belong together. Their history should be seen as aspects of the one Church History, the one developing pattern. A conviction like this lies behind the recommendation of Dr. I. Enklaar, accepted by the South-East Asia Christian Conference in 1956, that a Church History of Asia should be prepared. I have attempted to provide here some basic materials for such a history.

3. Church History should be relevant and interesting. I have been for twenty years a missionary in West Pakistan. I have shared in various kinds of missionary work—pastoral, evangelistic, educational, Christian literature, and so on. In my choice of material I have looked for what I felt to be relevant and helpful to the situation in a 'younger church' as I knew it. Moreover, there is no doubt that the early Church was a 'young church', and much of its experience and problems is specially relevant to 'younger churches' today.¹ But Church History should also be interesting. History is about people, events and ideas. The study of these ought to be fascinating, and can be, if students are guided along the right lines. We must not choose what is interesting for its own sake, and sacrifice truth to it ; but when an interesting account is authentic, it is much preferable to one which is as dry as dust.

4. History should avoid the easy acceptance of the legendary or the traditional for its own sake, or 'for the sake of national

¹ Cf. John Foster, *Then and Now*, pp. 127-129.

interest'.¹ Some Indian readers of this book may be disappointed that I have not given more space to the legends and traditions about the apostolate of Thomas in South India. I have quoted the *Acts of Thomas* in Farquhar's summary rather than *in extenso*. I have given the gist of the Thomas tradition as we have it from the oldest witness who speaks of it in detail—the Portuguese explorer Antonio de Gouvea; but I have not emphasised it. I feel rather that tradition should be judged in the light of history; our acceptance that tradition or legend has a historical basis should be founded on supporting documentary or archaeological evidence. This book only contains documents of whose general reliability I am reasonably confident. I have tried to give evidence which is contemporary, or nearly so, or evidence based on earlier sources.

5. Mission is vitally important. We should not think of mission—the Church's task of spreading the Gospel—as something special, and outside the purview of Church History in general.² It is basic and essential; it should be in the foreground. The section on Mission is the largest section in this book. It deals not simply with the geographical expansion of the church, but also with missionary methods, missionary preaching, and accounts of why and how people became Christians. I believe that Asian Churches today need to be reminded of the missionary enthusiasm and missionary effectiveness of the early Church, in Asia as well as Europe. There are, perhaps, things to be avoided, but we need to recapture the missionary spirit of men like Samsun of Arbil, or Origen of Alexandria, or the Patriarch Mar Aba.

6. I am convinced that Asian Churches would gain much if they realised the riches of the Christian inheritance they have in a part of Asian Christianity. To so many, Christianity seems an importation from the West. We are apt to forget that in origin Christianity came from Palestine. Christianity can claim to be as much an eastern as a western religion—it is a faith for the whole world. In the early centuries Christianity expanded eastwards as well as westwards. In West Pakistan today it is common for Christian children to be given Roman names, names

¹ John Foster, *The Teaching of Church History in India*, quoted above.

² Dr. John Foster has constantly emphasised this in all his work in Church History teaching, and in his books. Cf. Dr. I. Enklaar's recommendation to the E.A.C.C.: 'The *History of Missions* . . . should be integrated in the teaching of Church History . . . missions being the implementation of the Church's primary task in this world.'

of early Christian martyrs. The Church there knows about the martyrs of Carthage, Lyons and Vienne, about Polycarp, and about some of the others. But what does it know of its glorious record of martyrdom in the Persian Empire—about Shim'us bar Saba'i, the deacon Benjamin, the great confessor Mar Aba—or of the wonderful story of the women martyrs of Najran in Arabia? The Church has a heritage of piety, constancy and devotion that is eastern as well as western.

7. Finally, I am convinced that Christian witness, and Christian life, is important in a generation *for its own sake*. We are apt to make the mistake of looking at Church History from an essentially Western (if you like, nineteenth-century English, or twentieth-century American) point of view—that only what succeeds in the long run is worth while—‘nothing succeeds like success’. I believe that this is a false touchstone to apply to Church History. It is true that the Church of the East—the great Church whose centre was in Seleucia-Ctesiphon, and later Baghdad—is by no means as extensive today as it once was. I had to face persecutions—constant, persistent—of such a nature as the churches in the West were spared, and this went on for a millennium. It was subjected to wholesale massacre by the Tartars. What right have we to say that this Church was *worse* than the churches in the West, because so much of it perished? What right have we to throw at it the accusation of superstition and formalism, and heretical teaching, when so much in the West was not right, and needed a Reformation to change? My conviction is, rather, that in each generation the Church is called to be itself, to evangelise and live the Christian life; and that its piety and devotion, evangelistic spirit, love for the lost are valuable in themselves, and for what they achieve in that generation. The fact that China received the Gospel in 635 at a time when the Persian Empire, from which the missionaries had come, was being conquered by the Muslim Arabs, is surely not without significance. The state was being attacked; the church was sending out missionaries. I believe, therefore, that Church History should record what was worth while in churches which today may not even exist, but in their day and generation were faithful witnesses to the Gospel. I do not of course deny that the fact that the Roman Empire accepted Christianity is specially significant, and that in the Middle Ages so many Western states had—in fact or in name—Christian governments.

¹On this subject, see Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions* pp. 131-134.

I agree, too, that the West was a place of 'movements of renewal' and 'new eastward outreachings' again and again.¹ It is important to see the continuity also. We should have the one, and we should not neglect the other.

I believe that the type of source-material found in this book is important for historians as well as students, and that some of it will appeal to a wider public.

1. It provides raw material for historians, and here I am speaking particularly of *Asian* historians. It is perhaps easier for me—a missionary, a Scot, brought up to read and translate Latin and French—to hunt out some of the source-material. The ideal, of course, would be someone who could read Nestorian Syriac, another Mingana; but they are few, even in the United Kingdom. Some day I hope there will be an outstanding Asian Syriac scholar, who will go to the originals of many things as yet untranslated, and make them available to Asian historians. At present what can be done is to put some of the already translated material into English, in the hope that through the medium of this book it will find its way into modern Asian languages.² The task of writing Church History adequately from an Asian point of view must ultimately be done by Asian Christians, but they must base it on reliable, authentic source-material, and not be left to fall back simply upon traditions and legends, helped by a vivid imagination and a liberal use of conjecture!

2. It provides material for teachers and students. Asian Church History cannot be taught adequately from translations of Western text-books, or from Eastern text-books written from inadequate sources. The tendency of students—in India and Pakistan at any rate—is to memorise their lectures or their text-books. I believe that a healthy antidote to this is to teach students to go straight to the sources, and form their own conclusions. If they memorise some of the source-material, no harm has been done! This way of teaching will not be easy, but I believe that it can be attempted, if the material is made available in a reasonably digested form. In this book it has been carefully arranged, under subject-headings and sub-headings. It is hoped that the arrangement will be a real help to lecturers on Church History, and enable them to use the materials in close conjunction with their lectures. Not all subjects of lecture, of

¹ John Foster, *The Teaching of Church History in India*, quoted above.

² 58 passages in this book are from French and Latin translations of Syriac sources.

course, will lend themselves to this treatment ; but quite a wide range of subjects has been included.

3. It is, however, also my hope and prayer that Christian preachers and laymen will find much material in this book—whether it be events, or ideas, or examples of Christian character—which will be used in sermons and talks, so that Asian Christians may come to know something of the riches of their inheritance. I trust too that non-Christian historians and scholars will find the book helpful and stimulating.

Now for one or two specific points :

Fathers and Apologists. This book contains a great deal of material from the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists. Names like the *Didache*, Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Origen occur again and again. I believe that the problems faced by Christians in the Second and Third Centuries are essentially those faced in many Asian churches today, and that therefore these writers have a special relevance.¹ This does not mean that I agree with all they say ! There is much in Campbell Moody's contention² that many of its first hearers failed to understand the message of the Apostles, and that we, with the accumulated wisdom and experience of twenty centuries of Christianity, are in many ways better qualified to understand the Gospel in its fulness, than were the Apostolic Fathers and Apologists. These had their limitations and made their mistakes. In my choice of passages from their works, however, I have tried to be constructive ; this will be clear especially in the sections on Missionary Preaching and Missionary Methods.

Church and State. I would draw your attention to the very important section on Church and State in the Sassanid Persian Empire. Most churches in Asia are minority-churches, in countries whose governments do not profess Christianity. In some ways it is more important for them to know about Church-State relationships in Persia than in the Roman Empire after it became Christian. For instance, the Persian Church suffered persecution on a large scale ; and one reason was that its loyalties were at first to Christians outside its own country, and its leaders to some extent dependent on Christian leaders in the enemy Roman Empire. Has this a relevance today for churches which cross national frontiers ?

¹ On this subject, see John Foster, *Then and Now*, pp. 97-98.

² In *The Mind of the Early Converts*, chapters I-IV, esp. pp. 8, 48,

Heresies. I am ready to admit that heresy is wrong—it usually means an over-emphasis on one aspect of Christian truth. At the same time, it is only right to realise that in the early centuries heresies were often the result of adventurous thinking by deeply committed Christians; they were often the result of attempting to ‘get the message across’ to people whose ways of thinking were very different.¹ To a limited extent, therefore, our approach to heresy should be sympathetic—not that we should accept it, but that we should realise the problems these people faced, and accept the fact that mistaken experiments had to be made before people came to understand the wideness and fulness of the truth. People were often pushed to extremes by opponents who were unable or unwilling to understand what they were trying to express.

I have given particular and detailed attention to Nestorianism and Monophysitism, because they are specially relevant for Asia. The church in Persia—including India and China—was during the Middle Ages labelled ‘Nestorian’ by churches in the West who claimed to be ‘Orthodox’ and ‘Catholic’. The churches in Armenia and Arabia, Egypt and Ethiopia, and—after the strange appointment of a Jacobite Metropolitan in the Seventeenth Century—the Syrian Church in South India, were labelled ‘Monophysite’. In both ‘heresies’ there may seem to be an over-emphasis on one side of the truth, but I believe that in both cases Christians were trying to ‘get across’ something of vital importance, and they were driven to take up ‘heretical’ positions by the misunderstanding and intolerance of those who claimed to be ‘orthodox’. There were ‘Nestorian’ martyrs; there were ‘Monophysite’ martyrs. It is wrong to deny that they were Christian. We must rather seek to understand what they were trying to express, and—in an age when we are perhaps more aware of an essential kinship between God and man made in His image—how we may seek to express it more adequately.

Omissions. In a book like this, omission is inevitable, and is bound to give the book a bias. I have tried to be fair to the various aspects of Church History in the period covered. If I have had a bias, it has been in favour of the interesting, the personal, and the missionary. I have not stressed the legal—canons, rules and regulations: there are published collections of source-materials where these can be found in plenty. The main outlines of the development of doctrine have been sketched,

¹ On this subject, see John Foster, *Then and Now*, pp. 108-111.

and the main heresies noted ; to have gone into full detail would have required a book in itself. The same may be said with regard to liturgy and forms of worship : early forms of the Baptismal service and the canon of the Eucharist are included, but not a collection of orders of service. The size of the book aimed at has governed the amount of source-material included. It has also led me frequently to omit non-essential parts of a source, or to summarise.

No one can prepare a book like this without owing a great deal to other writers and scholars. To begin with, I would wish to express my gratitude to Dr. John Foster. This book really owes its origin to the vision he gave me of the function of Church History when I attended his lectures in Glasgow University in 1957-59. His enthusiasm for his subject, his constant reference to source-materials, his choice of what was relevant for a missionary situation, and his real love of the Church Fathers—all these meant a great deal to me. It was also my privilege to study in detail the message of the Christian Apologists under his guidance. During the preparation of this book he has been my constant guide and adviser. Its general lay-out is really his ; his criticism of material which was not original or scholastically reliable has been invaluable throughout its preparation. He has lent me many books, and guided me as to where to look for material. Above all, his enthusiasm has been a constant incentive. My debt to his published works—especially that gold-mine of source-materials, *After the Apostles*—is also great.

I owe a great deal to the late Alphonse Mingana, for his pioneering work in this field. His two articles on *The Early Spread of Christianity*, which appeared in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* in 1925-6, provide a rich field of translated source-materials about the Church of the East. References to these articles abound in later history-books, and I soon found I could not go very far without consulting Mingana ! What has been lacking, though, has been a readiness to follow up Mingana, and to go to the sources which he mentions without translating. I have tried to follow up one or two clues, and to bring to light a few passages which deserve to be better known ; I have also in places quoted the context of passages which Mingana quoted in isolation. Where I have disagreed with Mingana—on 'John, Bishop of Persia and Great India', the mission of Theophilus, or the date of the appointment of the first Indian Metropolitan—it has been after careful consideration of

the evidence. I owe much, too, to his earlier French translation of Mashiha-Zakha, and to his translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia's lectures on the Nicene Creed.

The work of earlier Syriac scholars and historians has also been drawn upon freely. In particular, it was with a sense of excited discovery that I read Wigram's *History of the Assyrian Church*, and Labourt's *Le Christianisme dans l'empire perse*, and consulted Chabot's *Synodicon Orientale* and Duval's Latin translation of Ishu'-Yab III's *Letters*.

My debt to earlier anthologists of source-material, like Kidd, Stevenson and Bettenson, and to modern English translations by Goodspeed, Chadwick, Sherley-Price, Williamson and Outler, will be clear from the large number of passages used. Full acknowledgment of permission to use copyright material is given in the Bibliography.

I should like to thank Mrs. Gilbert Noble, of Fraserburgh, for help with Latin translation work; and the Librarians and Staffs of Glasgow University, Trinity College, and Edinburgh University Libraries, for their unvarying patience and helpfulness.

The final revision of this book was done in Bangalore. I am particularly grateful for the help and guidance given there by Dr. V. C. Samuel, of the Syrian Orthodox Church in India. He lent me his thesis and other unpublished work, and this gave me a much better understanding of what the 'non-Chalcedonians' stood for. With his kind permission, this book includes fourteen hitherto unpublished translations from Syriac originals including one which he made specially for this book from a Syriac MS of Philoxenos of Mabbog. I also wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Baago, to the Librarians of the United Theological College and the Dharmaram College, and to others in Bangalore who helped in various ways.

Although I owe much to the guidance and advice of others, the final responsibility for the book is my own. It is sent out with the prayer that it may be of real and lasting help to historians, teachers, students, and the general public in Asia, and that through it Asian Christians may be brought to thank God in a new way for the rich heritage of their church's history. To God, and to Him alone, be the glory.

Fraserburgh, September 1965,
Bangalore, September 1967.

WILLIAM G. YOUNG

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Christ was sent first to an Asiatic Nation, the Jews,
and then through them to the whole World

I. INTRODUCTION

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

We observed earlier that it was not as if God had risen up from long slumber when He sent Jesus to the human race; although now, for good reasons, He has accomplished the work of His incarnation. He has always been doing good to mankind. For nothing good has happened among men without the Divine Word, who has visited the souls of those who are able, even if but for a short time, to receive these operations of the Divine Word.

Moreover, though the advent of Jesus was apparently in one corner, it was quite reasonable; since it was necessary that the one prophesied should visit those who had learnt that there was one God and who were waiting His prophets and teachings of the Christ they preached, and that He should come at a time when the doctrine would be poured forth from one corner all over the world.

For this reason also there was no need for many bodies to be in several places and to have many spirits like Jesus, so that the whole world might be enlightened by the Word of God. For the one Word was enough, who rose up as a

* The first spirit dwelling in Jesus.
† Chapter 100-101.

**Christ was sent first to an Asiatic Nation, the Jews,
and then through them to the whole World**

- 1 Celsus next says something to this effect: '... If God, like Zeus in the comic poet, woke up out of his long slumber and wanted to deliver the human race from evils, why on earth did he send this spirit that you mention¹ into one corner? He ought to have breathed into many bodies in the same way and sent them all over the world. The comic poet wrote that Zeus woke up and sent Hermes to the Athenians and Spartans because he wanted to raise a laugh in the theatre. Yet do you not think it is more ludicrous to make the Son of God to be sent to the Jews?'...

We observed earlier that it was not as if God had risen up from long slumber when He sent Jesus to the human race; although now, for good reasons, He has accomplished the work of His incarnation, He has always been doing good to mankind. For nothing good has happened among men without the Divine Word, who has visited the souls of those who are able, even if but for a short time, to receive these operations of the Divine Word.²

Moreover, though the advent of Jesus was apparently in one corner, it was quite reasonable; since it was necessary that the one prophesied should visit those who had learnt that there was one God, and who were reading His prophets and learning of the Christ they preached, and that He should come at a time when the doctrine would be poured forth from one corner all over the world.

For this reason also there was no need for many bodies to be in several places and to have many spirits like Jesus, so that the whole world might be enlightened by the Word of God. For the one Word was enough, who rose up as a

¹ The Holy Spirit dwelling in Jesus.

² Compare 99-100.

'sun of righteousness' [Malachi 4 : 2] to send forth from Judaea His rays which reach the souls of those who are willing to accept Him. If anyone should want to see many bodies filled with a Divine spirit, ministering to the salvation of men everywhere after the pattern of the one Christ, let him realise that those who in many places teach the doctrine of Jesus rightly and live an upright life are themselves also called Christs by the Divine Scriptures in the words: 'Touch not my Christs³ and do my prophets no harm.' [Psalm 105 : 15].

Moreover, just as we have heard that 'antichrist is coming', and have learnt no less that there are 'many antichrists' in the world [I John 2 : 18], in the same way knowing that Christ has come we see that because of Him there have been many Christs in the world, who like Him have 'loved righteousness and hated iniquity' [Psalm 45 : 7, Hebrews 1 : 9]; and on this account God, the God of Christ, has even anointed them with the oil of gladness. But He loved righteousness and hated iniquity more than His fellows and took the first fruits of the anointing, even, so to speak, the whole anointing of the oil of gladness; whereas His fellows, each one as he had the capacity, shared in His anointing. That is why, since Christ is the Head of the Church [Colossians 1 : 18], so that Christ and the Church are one body, the oil on the head descended upon the beard of Aaron... till it reached the skirts of his garment [Psalm 133 : 2]⁴...

Accordingly there is nothing ludicrous in the fact that the Son of God has been sent among the Jews with whom the prophets lived, so that beginning from there in bodily form He might rise with power and spirit upon the world of souls.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 6 : 78-9 (C.⁵)

³ The word Christ means 'Anointed.'

⁴ Aaron and his robes are compared to Christ and His Church.

⁵ Where Chadwick's translation has been altered, it has always been by translating 'Word' instead of transliterating 'Logos'.

Origen, born in Egypt, settled in Palestine, speaking Greek, represents in his person Africa, Asia and Europe. With this allegorical passage we can compare Acts 1:8 and 13:47.

The Roman Empire and the Spread of the Gospel

- 2 'Righteousness arose in His [Christ's] days, and abundance of peace' [Psalm 72:6] began with His birth; God was preparing the nations for His teaching, that they might be under one Roman emperor, so that the unfriendly attitude of the nations to one another, caused by the existence of a large number of kingdoms, might not make it more difficult for Jesus' Apostles to do what was commanded them when He said, 'Go and teach all nations' [Matthew 28:19]. It is quite clear that Jesus was born during the reign of Augustus, the one who reduced to uniformity, so to speak, the many kingdoms of the earth so that he had a single empire. It would have hindered Jesus' teaching from being spread through the whole world if there had been many kingdoms... because men everywhere would have been compelled to do military service and to fight in defence of their own land... How could this teaching, which preaches peace and does not even allow men to take vengeance on their enemies, have had any success unless the international situation had everywhere been changed and a milder spirit prevailed at the advent of Jesus?

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 2:30 (C.)

Origen might also have mentioned the excellent Roman roads, and the fact that all over the Empire Greek was the language of educated people.

East of the Roman Empire

a. *The Land Route*

East of the Roman Empire lay two small buffer-states, Osrhoene (Urhai), with its capital Edessa (Urha), and Armenia. Beyond lay the loosely-knit Empire of the Parthians, whose rule extended to the Oxus and the Indus. The Parthians were hostile to Rome. Christianity possibly spread into Parthia through Edessa. See **II**.

b. *The Sea Route*

To avoid the Parthians, Greek traders from Egypt used the route by the Red and Arabian Seas to ports in West Pakistan and India, to trade not only with these countries but with China.

The First Part of the Journey

The Greek geographer Strabo, writing about 7 B.C., describes the first part of the journey from personal observation.

- 3 The entrance of a Roman army into Happy Arabia [the Yemen]¹ under the command of my friend and companion Aelius Gallus [probably in 25-24 B.C.], and the trade of the Alexandrian merchants, whose vessels pass up the Nile and the Arabian Gulf to India, have made us much better acquainted with these countries than our predecessors were. I was with Gallus at the time when he was Prefect of Egypt, and accompanied him as far as Syene and the frontiers of Ethiopia, and I found that about 120 ships sail from Myos-Hormos² to India, although, in the time of the Ptolemies,³ scarcely anyone would venture on this voyage and the trade with the Indies . . .

At present all the Indian, Arabian and South Ethiopian merchandise which is imported by the Arabian Gulf is brought to Koptos,⁴ which is the market for such commodities . . . Koptos and Myos-Hormos are well-known, and busy. Formerly the camel-merchants travelled at night, guiding their course by observing the stars, and, like sailors, carried a supply of water with them. But watering places are now provided; water can also be got by digging to a great depth, and although the rain rarely falls, rain-water is found and collected also in reservoirs. It is a journey of six or seven days.

—Strabo, *Geography* 2 : 5. 12 and 17 : 1. 45 (H. & F.*)

¹ The word 'Yemen' means 'right hand' and suggests good fortune.

² A port on the Red Sea coast in the south of Egypt.

³ Greek Kings of Egypt.

⁴ A port in Egypt, 500 miles up the Nile.

The Voyage to the East

A Guidebook for traders, written about 60 A.D., gives details of ports in the Red and Arabian Seas, conditions of sailing, imports and exports. On the west coast of the Red Sea, the chief ports are Myos-Hormos and Berenike in Egypt, Adulis (30 miles south of Massawa) in Ethiopia, and Malao (Berbera). In Arabia, important ports are Muza (Mocha in the Yemen), Aden, Cana 250 miles east of Aden, and Moscha 450 miles further on the same coast. From Cana ships sail to what is now West Pakistan and India.

- 4 This whole voyage . . . they used to make in small vessels, sailing close around the shores of the gulfs ; and Hippalus [about 45 A.D.] was the pilot who by observing the location of the ports and the conditions of the sea, first discovered how to lay his course straight across the ocean. For [in July] on the shores of India the wind sets in from the ocean [the monsoon], and this south-west wind is called Hippalus, from the name of the one who first discovered the passage across. From that time to the present day, ships start, some direct from Cana, and some from the Cape of Spices [Cape Guardafui, East Africa] ; and those bound for Damirica [Tamil Country] throw the ship's head considerably off the wind ; while those bound for Barygaza [Broach, Gujarat] and Scythia [Sind] keep alongshore not more than three days and for the rest of the time hold the same course straight out to sea from that region.

The account speaks of the mouths of the Indus, and its chief port of Barbarike, S.-E. of modern Karachi, and the inland capital of Minnagara, in the region of modern Hyderabad (West Pakistan).

There follows the coast district of Scythia, which lies above towards the north, the whole marshy. From it flows down the River Sinthus [Indus], the greatest of all the rivers that flow into the Red [Arabian] Sea, bringing down an enormous volume of water, so that a long way out at sea . . . the water of the ocean is fresh from it . . . This river has seven mouths, very shallow and marshy, so that they are not navigable, except the one in the middle, at which, by the shore, is the market-town, Barbarike. In front of it lies a small island, and inland behind it is the metropolis of Scythia, Minnagara ; it is subject to Parthian princes who are constantly driving each other out. The ships lie at anchor at Barbarike, but all their cargoes are carried up to the metropolis by the river . . . Into this market are imported a great deal of thin clothing, some of it pretty cheap stuff, linens, topaz, coral, [resin], frankincense, vessels of glass, silver and gold plate, and a little wine. On the other hand there are exported costus [spice], bdellium, [yellow dye], nard, turquoise, lapis lazuli, Seric skins,¹ cotton cloth, silk thread, and indigo.

But the main port for trade with the Punjab and China, as well as with Central India, seems to have been Broach, in Gujarat.

¹ Dyed hides from China.

Native fishermen . . . pilot vessels to Barygaza. They steer them straight from the mouth of the bay between the shoals, . . . and they tow them to fixed anchorages . . . The country inland from Barygaza is inhabited by numerous tribes, such as Aratii [Punjabis], the Arachosii [Afghans], the Gandharei [people of Taxila district] and the people of Proclais [Charsadda near Peshawar]. In it is Bucephalus Alexandria [Jhelum]. Above these is the very warlike nation of the Bactrians, who are under their own king.

By this time the Bactrians, or Kushans, had conquered the Parthian kingdom of Vindafarna, and were ruling in both Afghanistan and the Punjab.

Inland from [Barygaza] and to the east is a city called Ozene [Ujjain], formerly a royal capital; from this place are brought down . . . many things for our trade: agate and carnelian, Indian muslins and [coarse blue] cloth, and much ordinary cloth. Through this same region and from the upper country is brought the spikenard that comes through Proclais: that is, the Kaspapyrene [Kashmiri] and Paropanisene [from Hindu Kush] and Kabolitic [from Kabul], and that brought through the adjoining country.²

The account goes on to speak of Kalliena (Kalyan, near Bombay), which was a risky port because of political instability, and of the Tamil ports on the Malabar coast, especially Muziris (Kranganur).

Muziris . . . abound in ships sent there with cargoes from Arabia, and by the Greeks. It is located on a river . . . They send large ships there on account of the great quantity and bulk of pepper and cinnamon leaves. [Among the imports there are] a great quantity of coin, topaz, a little thin clothing, figured linens, antimony, coral, crude glass, copper, tin, lead, not much wine but as much as at Barygaza, [red and yellow dyes]. The exports are pepper . . . great quantities of fine pearls, ivory, silk cloth, spikenard from the Ganges, cinnamon leaves from the places in the interior, transparent stones of all kinds, diamonds and sapphires, and tortoise-shell.

Then follow Cape Comorin, the island of Taprobane (Ceylon) with its pearls and tortoise-shell, and ports as far as the Ganges, which 'rises and falls in the same way as the Nile'. A market-town at its mouth exports 'muslins of the finest sorts'.

² No wonder spikenard was very expensive. (See Mark 14 : 3).

After this region, far to the north . . . in a land called Thin [China], there is a very great inland city called Thinae [Ch'ang-an ?], from which silk thread and cloth are brought on foot through Bactria to Barygaza, and are also exported to Damirica by way of the River Ganges. But the land of Thin is not easy of access—few men come from there, and seldom.

—*Guidebook to the Red Sea*, paras 57, 38, 39, 43, 47, 48, 54 and 64 (Schoff*).

The Land and Sea Routes to China in the Sixth Century

The Gospel was to reach China in 635 A.D. (see 33). The following account of the trade-routes to China was written less than a century earlier.

- 5 This country of silk is situated in the remotest of all the Indies, and lies to the left of those who enter the Indian Sea, far beyond the Persian Gulf, and the island called by the Indians Sielediba¹ and by the Greeks Taprobane [Ceylon]. It is called Tzinitisa [China], and is surrounded on the left by the Ocean. . . The Indian philosophers, called the Brahmans, say that if you stretch a cord from Tzinitisa to pass through Persia, onward to the Roman dominions, the middle of the earth would be quite correctly traced, and they are perhaps right. For the country in question deflects considerably to the left, so that the loads of silk passing by land through one nation after another, reach Persia in a comparatively short time ; while the route by sea to Persia is vastly greater . . . This is why there is always a great quantity of silk to be found in Persia. Beyond Tzinitisa there is neither navigation nor any land to inhabit.

—Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*, from Book 2 (McC.*).

¹ Sanskrit 'Sinhala-dvipa'—the Island of the Sinhalese.

John 1:1-18

How is it that we have seen each of us in his own

beginning in Jerusalem

—John 1:1-18

beginning the conversion of the Church
our enemies' but rather than he and Jesus our witnesses
which was to him our witness, not only to our work but on
Christ to teach to all the world of God. And we are for-
bidden to teach that of men that they have seen by the
word of God in Jesus. And in the power of God they
were in witness, into the world, and these witnesses and
baptized. Let them be witnesses that they go out into
[Matthew 28:19] even so it was come to pass, as yet our re-
sistant nation, which shall be a sign to all men and women,
which into living people. Which shall be a sign to all men
and shall be a sign to all men and women, which shall be a sign
in the midst of the nations, and shall be a sign to all men
and women, and a sign of the Lord, which shall be a sign
the baptism of the Lord, which shall be a sign to all men
and women, which shall be a sign to all men and women.

NOISSIM II

beginning in Jerusalem

THE CENTRE—JERUSALEM

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

A. THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL

I. THE CENTRE—JERUSALEM

Beginning from Jerusalem

- 6 When as prophesying those things which are to happen, the prophetic Spirit says this, 'out of Zion shall go forth a law, and a word of the Lord from Jerusalem, and he judges in the midst of the nations, and shall rebuke much people. And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' [Isaiah 2 : 3-4], even so it has come to pass, as you can be persuaded. Far from Jerusalem there did go out men, twelve in number, into the world, and these unlearned, and with no ability in speech. And in the power of God they proclaimed to every race of men that they were sent by the Christ to teach to all the Word of God. And we who formerly used to kill one another, not only do not make war on our enemies, but, rather than lie and deceive our inquisitors, willingly die confessing the Christ.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 39 (A.A.)

Beginning in Jerusalem

- 7 How is it then that we hear them, each of us in his own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites; inhabitants of Mesopotamia, of Judaea¹ and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, of Phrygia and Pamphylia, of Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene; visitors from Rome, both

¹ Tertullian reads 'Armenia', John Chrysostom 'India', and Jerome 'Syria'.

Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs, we hear them telling in our own tongues the great things God has done.

—Acts 2 : 8-11 (N.E.B.).

Note that among those converted on the Day of Pentecost there would be Jews from Eastern countries, who would return home afterwards with the good news. Compare Bardaisan's account (14).

2. EASTWARDS

Edessa

Edessa, a town lying on the River Daisan, about 30 miles north of Haran (Genesis 12 : 4), was capital of a small independent city-state lying between the Roman and Parthian Empires called Osrhoene (Urhai). In 216 it was annexed by the Romans.

The First Christian City

It is possible that Christianity first came to Edessa in the Apostolic period, but the origins are obscured by legends. It is probable that King Abgar VIII (179-214) became a Christian not later than 180.

Coins of the period 180-192 show a cross on the King's tiara for the first time (British Museum, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia*, Plate xiii, No. 14 and pp. 93-94).

Bardaisan, writing about 196, refers to a revolting idolatrous custom in Edessa, and adds :

- 8 When King Abgar became a believer he commanded that everyone that [continued this evil practice] should have his hand cut off, and from that day until now no one does so in the country of Edessa.

—Bardaisan, *Dialogue on Fate* (A.N.C.L.)

The First Church Building of which we can be Sure

The *Edessene Chronicle*, written about 590, quotes older city records. One record, carefully dated November 201, speaks of a serious flood, which came at night.

- 9 And Abgar the King stood on the great tower called the Persian Tower, and saw the water by the light of torches . . .

The waters broke down the western wall of the city, and entered the city, and overthrew the great and beautiful palace of our lord the King, and... they destroyed the temple of the church of the Christians...

Now Mar Yahab bar Shemesh, and Qayuma bar Magartat, the Scribe of Edessa, recorded this event...; and Bar Din and Balid, who are Prefects over the Archives of Edessa, received and deposited it.

—*Edessene Chronicle* 8 (Latin in Assemani *B.O.* 1: 9, pp. 387 ff. Translated in *J.S.L.* New Series 5, pp. 30-31).

The First Translation of the Gospels

Tatian, who calls himself 'the Assyrian', was probably born in the Parthian Empire, east of the Tigris. He was converted in Rome (see 78), but later returned to the east. It is believed that he was in Edessa when he prepared his 'Combined Gospel'.

- 10 Tatian produced a composite work by somehow combining the Gospels, and called it the *Diatessaron* ['through Four']: some people still possess copies.¹ It is said that he was bold enough to alter some of the Apostles' expressions as though trying to rectify their phraseology.²

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4: 29. 6 (W.)

¹ Eusebius was writing in the fourth century. A century later Theodoret of Cyrrhus found more than 200 copies in his diocese.

² Eusebius was doubtless speaking about a Greek copy. It is not known whether the *Diatessaron* was originally written in Greek or Syriac, but scholars believe it was written soon after 150, and was available in Syriac before 200, when the Old Syriac translation of the Gospels was made. It was the only version of the Gospel translated into Arabic before the Hijra, and is available today in full only in Arabic!

Edessa remained a centre of Christian scholarship till 489, when its Theological School was closed by the Emperor.

The Coming of Christianity to Arbil

It is possible that Christianity entered the Parthian Empire through Edessa, and then northwards, and down the east bank of the Tigris, through Bait Zabdi (which had a bishop before 120) to Arbil and the country of Hedayab (Adiabene) which had had Jewish rulers in the First Century. The following account of the conversion of Paqida, in 99 (he became the first Bishop of Arbil in 104), may well contain historical elements.

- 11 The first Bishop which the land of Hedayab had, according to the learned doctor Habil, is Mar Paqida, who was personally ordained by the Apostle Addai.¹ He was the son of a poor man called Beri, who was the slave of a Magian.

Paqida saw Addai perform a miracle, and decided to become a Christian.

The tongue cannot paint the persecutions he had to suffer from his father and his near relations, nor can the mind imagine them. When in spite of it all he stuck to his resolution, his parents imprisoned him in a dark room, but he got help, and the door was opened for him. He ran and went to look for the Apostle, but could not find him. When he heard that he had gone to the mountain villages, he also went there, and rejoined him, to be his disciple and receive his blessing. [Addai took him about with him on his preaching tours.] They say that after five years he laid hands on him and sent him home to his own country.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 2-3 (French in Mingana, S.S. I, pp. 77-79. Y.)

¹ Traditionally one of the Twelve, or of the Seventy (Luke 10 : 1), but certainly a generation later.

Accounts of Early Church Buildings

- 12 Mar Izhaq [Bishop of Arbil 135-148] had built a large and well-planned church, which is in existence today¹ [c. 560] and is called by his name. . . .

After the death [of Bishop Noah in 179] our Church was widowed and bereft of pastor, because of the hatred of pagans and Magi. Our brothers suffered a lot in these days. Many who were young and weak in their faith went back to the religion of the demons; for they saw their houses plundered, their sons and daughters either seized [openly] or kidnapped, and they themselves severely beaten by the Enemy of the human race. After four years, the Christians of our land gathered together, with the priests and deacons, and chose Mar Habil to be their Bishop. [He was con-

¹ It is possible that these church buildings were later than stated here. The evidence is not so reliable as that of the non-Christian Scribes and Archivists of Edessa. In the Roman Empire, Churches were not built before the middle of the third century. See 418.

separated by a neighbouring bishop.] But the memory of the blessed Noah was kept alive by the Christians. They built a church which they dedicated to his name, and whose site can be seen to this day. Christians go there daily to put themselves under his protection, and ask his prayers for them and their families.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 10, 18, and 19 (French in Mingana, *S.S. I*, pp. 86, 95 and 96. Y.)

‘The Hymn of the Soul’—a Parthian ‘Pilgrim’s Progress’

‘The Hymn of the Soul’ (sometimes called ‘The Song of the Pearl’) is a Christian allegorical poem in Syriac, written about 200, possibly by Bardaisan, while the Parthian Empire still stood. It speaks of the Christian’s life as a pilgrimage, beginning in the homeland south of the Caspian, going through Maishan, the country round Basra, to Egypt, to bring back a precious Pearl and the ultimate return with the Pearl. The hymn is particularly interesting because it is so early, and written from the viewpoint of ‘free-born’ Eastern people, not under the domination of the Roman Empire.

The hymn is now believed to be Gnostic, but if the idea of the soul being born in heaven is not pressed, it can be given an orthodox interpretation. Not all the details of the allegory are clear, but its general meaning can be understood if the following interpretations are made:

The House of my Father—the heavenly home	
My Robe	—the heavenly body
My Father	—God the Father
My Mother	—God the Holy Spirit (see 282)
My Brother	—God the Son
My Letter	—The Holy Scriptures
The Pearl	—righteousness.

The hymn has also been interpreted as an account of the Incarnation and Christ’s work of Redemption, but I do not find this convincing.

13 While I was yet but a little child in the House of my Father
 Brought up in luxury, well-content with the life of the
 Palace,
 Far from the East, our home, my Parents sent me to travel
 And from the royal Hoard they prepared me a load for the
 journey,
 Precious it was, yet light, that alone I carried the burden

Median gold it contained, and silver from Atropatene,¹
Garnet and ruby from Hindustan, and Bactrian² agate;
Adamant harness was girded upon me, stronger than iron;
But my Robe they took off, wherewith their love had
adorned me,
And the bright Tunic woven of scarlet and wrought to
my stature.

For they decreed and wrote on my heart that I should not
forget it;
'If thou go down and bring from Egypt the Pearl, the
unique one,
Guarded there in the Sea that envelops the loud-hissing
Serpent,
Thou shalt be clothed again with thy Robe and the Tunic
of scarlet,
And with thy Brother, the Prince, shalt thou inherit the
Kingdom.'

So I quitted the East, two Guardians guiding me down-
wards,
Hard was the way for a child, and a dangerous journey to
travel,
Soon I had passed Maishan, the mart of the Eastern mer-
chants,
Over the soil of Babylon then I hurried my footsteps,
And my companions left me within the borders of Egypt.

Straight to the Serpent I went and near him settled my
dwelling,
Till he should slumber and sleep, and the Pearl I should
snatch from his keeping.
I was alone, an exile under a foreign dominion,
None did I see of the free-born race of the Easterns,
Save one youth, a son of Maishan, who became my com-
panion.

He was my friend to whom I told the tale of my venture,
Warned him against the Egyptians and all their ways of
uncleanness,
Yet in their dress I clothed myself to escape recognition,

¹ Azarbaijan.

² Kaishan or Kushan. See 4, 14.

Being afraid lest when they saw that I was a stranger
Come from afar for the Pearl, they would rouse the Serpent
against me.

It was from him perchance they learnt I was none of their
kindred,
And in their guile they gave me to eat of their unclean
dainties ;
Thus I forgot my race and I served the king of the country,
Nay, I forgot the Pearl for which my parents had sent me,
While from their poisonous food I sank into slumber
unconscious.

All that had chanced my Parents knew and they grieved
for me sorely,
Through the land they proclaimed for all at our Gates to
assemble—
Parthian Princes and Kings, and all the Eastern Chieftains—
There they devised an escape that I should not perish in
Egypt,
Writing a letter signed in the name of each of the Chief-
tains.

‘ From thy Father. the King of Kings—from the Queen,
thy Mother—
And from thy Brother—to thee, our Son in Egypt, be
greeting !
Up and arise from sleep, and hear the words of our Letter !
Thou art the son of Kings ; by whom art thou held in
bondage ?
Think of the Pearl for which thou wast sent to sojourn in
Egypt.

‘ Think of thy shining Robe and remember thy glorious
Tunic ;
These thou shalt wear when thy name is enrolled in the
list of the heroes,
And with thy Brother Viceroy thou shalt be in the
Kingdom.’
This was my Letter, sealed with the King’s own Seal on
the cover,
Lest it should fall in the hands of the fierce Babylonian
demons.

High it flew as the Eagle, King of the birds of the heaven,
Flew and alighted beside me, and spoke in the speech of
my country,

Then at the sound of its tones I started and rose from my
slumber;³

Taking it up I kissed and broke the Seal that was on it,
And like the words engraved on my heart were the words
of the Letter.

So I remembered my Royal race and my free-born nature,
So I remembered the Pearl, for which they had sent me
to Egypt,

And I began to charm the terrible loud-hissing Serpent;
Down he sank into sleep at the sound of the Name of my
Father,

And at my Brother's Name, and the Name of the Queen,
my Mother.⁴

Then I seized the Pearl and homewards started to journey,
Leaving the unclean garb I had worn in Egypt behind me;
Straight for the East I set my course, to the light of the
homeland,

And on the way in front I found the Letter that roused me—
Once it awakened me, now it became a Light to my path-
way.⁵

For with its silken folds it shone on the road I must travel,
And with its voice and leading it cheered my hurrying
footsteps,

Drawing me on in love across the perilous passage,
Till I had left the land of Babylon safely behind me
And I had reached Maishan, the sea-washed haven of
merchants:

What I had worn of old, my Robe with its Tunic of scarlet,
Thither my Parents sent from the far Hyrcanian mountains,
Brought by the hand of the faithful warders who had it in
keeping;

I was a child when I left it, nor could its fashion remember,
But when I looked, the Robe had received my form and
my likeness.

³ Conversion, or the 'illumination' associated with Baptism.

⁴ The use of the Threefold Name in Baptism.

⁵ Psalm 119: 105.

It was myself that I saw before me as in a mirror ;
 Two in number we stood, yet only one in appearance,
 Not less alike than the strange twin guarding figures
 Bringing my Robe, each marked with the royal Escutcheon,
 Servants both of the King whose troth restored me my
 Treasure.

Truly a royal Treasure appeared my Robe in its glory,
 Gay it shone with beryl and gold, sardonxy and ruby,
 Over its varied hues there flashed the colour of sapphire,
 All its seams with stones of adamant firmly were fastened,
 And upon all the King of Kings Himself was depicted.

While I gazed it sprang into life as a sentient creature,
 Even as if endowed with speech and hearing I saw it,
 Then I heard the tones of its voice as it cried to the keepers :
 ' He, the Champion, he for whom I was created by my
 Father—

Hast thou not marked me, how my stature grew with his
 labours ? '

All the while with kingly mien my Robe was advancing,
 Flowing towards me as if impatient with those who bore it ;
 I too longed for it, ran to it, grasped it, put it upon me,
 Once again I was clothed in my Robe and adorned with its
 beauty,
 And the bright many-hued Tunic again was gathered
 about me.

Clad in my Robe I betook me up to the Gate of the Palace,
 Bowing my head to the glorious Sign of my Father that
 sent it ;
 I had performed His behest and He had fulfilled what He
 promised,
 So in the Satraps'^o Court I joined the throng of the
 Chieftains—
 He with favour received me, and near Him I dwell in the
 Kingdom.

—*The Hymn of the Soul* (Burkitt, E.E.C.)

^o Rulers of Provinces.

Christians in Asian Countries, and their Customs

The following extract from Bardaisan's *Dialogue on Fate* (for the context, see 115), shows that about 196 a Christian living in Edessa knew Christianity to be widespread in Asian lands to the east of him.

- 14 And what shall we say of the new race of us Christians, whom Christ at His coming planted in every country and in every region? For lo! wherever we are, we are all called after the one name of Christ—Christians. On one day, the first of the week, we assemble ourselves together, and on specified days we abstain from food. The brethren... who are in Parthia do not take two wives; nor do those who are in Judaea circumcise themselves; nor do our sisters who are among the Gilanians¹ and the Kaishans² consort with strangers; nor do those brethren who are in Persia marry their daughters; nor do those who are in Media abandon their dead, or bury them alive, or give them as food to the dogs; nor do those who are in Edessa kill their wives or sisters when they commit impurity, but they withdraw from them, and hand them over to the judgment of God; nor do those who are in Hatra³ stone thieves to death; but, wherever they are, and in whatever place they are found, the laws of their several countries do not prevent them from obeying the law of their Christ.

—Bardaisan, *Dialogue on Fate* (A.-N.C.L.*)

¹ Compare 15. Gilan and Delam were both south-west of the Caspian Sea.

² Compare 4 and 13. At that time the Kaishans ruled over Afghanistan and most of West Pakistan.

³ About 100 miles south of Nineveh.

The Parthian Church in 225

Immediately following a description of the downfall of the Parthians (see 379) Mashiha-Zakha gives the following list of Christian sees:

- 15 The Church had more than twenty bishops: at Bait Zabdi,¹ at Karka of Bait Salok [Kirkuk], at Kashkar [Ur], at Bait Lapat [Gundeshapur], at Hormizd-Ardashir [Ahwaz],

¹ See 11.

at Parat Maishan [Basra], at Hanitha, at Harbat-Galal, at Arzon, at Bait Niqtor, at Shahr-Qard, at Bait Maskene, at Halwan [Halah], at Bait Qatari [Qatar], at Bait Hezzi,² at Bait Delami,³ at Shigar, and in yet other cities.⁴ Nisibin and the Cities [Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Parthian Capital Cities] did not yet have bishops, because of fear of the pagans.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil* 30 (French in Mingana, S.S. I pp. 106-7. Y.)

² Location unknown.

³ See 14. Note 1.

⁴ Including, of course, Arbil itself, whose bishop was Hiran.

The list gives the picture of a church whose strength is in Mesopotamia, but which has stretched out northwards to the Caspian, and south of the Persian Gulf to Qatar, and has footholds in Media (Halah) and Elam (Gundeshapur). No diocese north-east of the Persian Gulf is mentioned.

Metropolitan Sees in the Sassanid Empire, and Beyond

The Church in the Sassanid Empire (226-652) is of central importance for the spread of Christianity in Asia up to the late Middle Ages. It became officially 'Nestorian' in 612 (see 302), but kept the name 'Church of the East'. Its Scriptures and liturgy were in Syriac, but Persian and other languages were also used. Its spiritual and administrative head was the Patriarch, or Catholicos, of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, the Capital Cities of the Empire. His primacy was not fully established till 410 (see 393-395), and his independence of the West till 424 (see 397). After that time, all metropolitans and bishops of the Church, from as far distant as India, Turkestan and China, had normally to come to the Patriarch for authorisation (see 394).

The order of the creation of metropolitan sees is important, and gives the picture of a Church whose great strength was in Mesopotamia, but which was reaching out eastwards. The available evidence is not entirely consistent. The most important is given below, followed by a suggested order.

Lists in Historians and Canonists

The lists given by Elias of Damascus (893) as in Assemani, B.O. 3:2, pp. 458-9, and by 'Abd-Ishu' by his modernised version of the canons of the Synod of Seleucia (410) given in Chabot, S.O. pp. 619-20, are not given here, as they are obviously incomplete.

(a) *Ibn at-Tayyib* (d. 1043)

- 16 When the diocese of a metropolitan is large and contains big towns, the Patriarch may divide it into many provinces in order to safeguard the purity of the faith... Indeed the Canon of the Fathers has empowered the Patriarch to create metropolitans wherever he wants... The rank of the metropolitans is regulated by the time of the creation of their respective sees. Papa [c. 291-325] created metropolitans first to Gundeshapur, then to Nisibin, then to Basra, then to Mosul.¹ At the time of the [Council of Nicaea 325] the Garmaeans asked for a metropolitan from Shim'un bar Saba'i [c. 325-341] and he nominated one for them. In the time of the Catholicos Izhaq [399-410] the Metropolitans of Fars and Merv were created; and in the time of Ishu'-Yab² the Metropolitans of Halwan, Harat, Samarqand, India and China were established.

—*Canons of Ibn at-Tayyib*, folio 198b (Mingana, *B. J. R. L.* 9, reprint pp. 74-5*).

¹ This is an anachronism. In Sassanid times Arbil was the metropolitan city of a province which is first called Hedayab (Adiabene), and later Assyria (Assur).

² Was this Ishu'-Yab I (582-595), II (628-643) or III (650-660)? Mingana suggests that Ishu'-Yab II created the Metropolitans of India and China, but this seems to me too early. See 432 note 2.

(b) 'Abd-ishu' (d. 1318)

- 17 The precedence that the metropolitan sees take of one another is determined by the priority of the Patriarchs who created them; and their rank is as follows:

The first Patriarch who nominated metropolitans is Papa (c. 291-325). He created first of all the Metropolitan See of Elam, and a short time after the Metropolitan See of Nisibin; then that of the South, which is Parat Maishan, and then that of Assyria...¹

At the time of [the Council of Nicaea] the Garmaeans asked for a Metropolitan. [There were rival claimants]. And Shim'un bar Saba'i [c. 325-341], in order to settle the claims of both parties, intimated that he would promote [the town whose Bishop] was the more conspicuous in the work of evangelisation. The Bishop of Sargard won, and

¹ These are the same first four sees as in *Ibn at-Tayyib*. See 16.

Shim'un bar Saba'i created the See of the Metropolitan in Bait Garma . . .²

The Acts of the Synod of Izhaq [410] also make mention of Fars and Merv, not precisely as metropolitan, but as high ecclesiastical sees, because the genuine Metropolitan of Fars, which is sixth in rank, was created and organised by Yab-Alaha [I, 415-420], together with the seventh metropolitan see, which is that of Merv.

And Ishu'-Yab of Gadala [II, 628-643] created the eighth metropolitan see of Halwan; but Harat, Samarqand and China, it was the Catholicos Saliba-Zakha [712-728] who created them into metropolitan sees and some say that it was . . . Shila [505-523]. But in rank Harat and India take precedence of China, and China takes precedence of Samarqand.

—*Canons of 'Abd-ishu'* pp. 303-4 (Mingana, *B.J.R.L.* 9, reprint p. 75*).

* The headquarters of this see soon came to be Karka (Kirkuk).

(c) *'Amr ibn Matta and Saliba ibn Yuhanna, (c. 1350)*

Two recensions of the *Book of the Tower*, a history of the Nestorian Patriarchs by Mari ibn Suleman (fl. 1140), were made by 'Amr and Saliba. Probably 'Amr copied and amended Saliba's version. The metropolitan sees relevant here are given in the same order in both 'Amr's and Saliba's lists. The following quotation is from 'Amr.

18 The metropolitans of the Patriarch of the East have the following sees, which are given in their order of precedence :

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Gundeshapur. | 2. Nisibin. | 3. Basra. |
| 4. Mosul and Assur. | 5. Arbil and Hazzah. | 6. Ba[it]-Garma. |
| 7. Halwan. | 8. Fars. | 9. Merv. |
| 10. Harat. | 11. Qatarbah [Qatar]. | 12. Sin [China]. |
| 13. Hind [India] . . . | 18. Samarqand . . . | |

And each one of these metropolitans has from twelve to six bishops under him. [The first seven have the right to elect and ordain the Patriarch.]

—'Amr, *History of the Nestorian Patriarchs*, p. 126 (Latin in Gismondi, *M.A.S.*, 'Amr, pp. 72-3. Y.)

Attendances at Synods

Reliable information can be compiled from the official records of attendances at Church Synods. In the following summary, the first column gives the name of the see, the second (in brackets) a note whether it was said by Mashiha-Zakha to have had a bishop in 225; the third gives the first and last Synod at which a 'bishop' attended from that see, and the fourth the first Synod where a 'metropolitan' attended, or gave his assent by proxy.

19	See	[225]	'Bishop'	'Metropolitan'
	Gundeshapur	Yes		410
	Nisibin	No		410
	Parat Maishan	Yes		410
	Arbil	Yes		410
	Karka of Bait-Salok	Yes		410
	Riwardashir	No mention	410	424
	Merv	No mention	424-497	554
	Harat	No mention	424-497	585
	Halwan [Halah] ¹	Yes	410-605	780
	Bait Qatari [Qatar]	Yes	410	676

India, China, and Samarqand are not mentioned at all in the records.

—*Records of Synods* (from Chabot, S.O. Y.)

¹ The 'promotion' of Halwan above Fars (Riwardashir) and Merv in 'Amr's list is probably due to the fact that the Metropolitan of Halwan was later one of those authorised to elect the Patriarch, and not to the priority of the creation of the see.

Letters of Ishu'-Yab III (650-660)

The letters of Ishu'-Yab III to Shim'un, Metropolitan of Riwardashir, make sense only if India and Qatar were included in the See of Fars when they were written (see 430-445). In a letter to the Monks of Qatar, important information is given about bishops and metropolitans in the east.

- 20 Lo, there are more than twenty bishops and two metropolitans in the East,¹ who have received in the past, and receive in the present, episcopal ordination from the Church of God [i.e. the Patriarch], and none of them have come to us for many years, nor did we ask them to come, but we know that in spite of the long distance that separates them from us they fulfil the obligations of their episcopacy in

¹ Mingana understands this to mean 'beyond the Oxus', and suggests that the sees were Kashgar and Samarqand. It seems more likely that the Metropolitans of Merv and Harat are meant, and other bishops further east, including China.

strict conformity with the Church of God, while the rights of their episcopal jurisdiction are duly received from us. We write to them and they write to us.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letters* 3 : 21, para 5 (Latin in C.S.C.O. 2 : 63 p. 202. Mingana *B.J.R.L.* 9, reprint pp. 73-4*).

Thomas of Marga (c. 840).

Thomas of Marga, on the authority of an earlier writer, describes the difficulties faced by the Patriarch George I (661-680), the immediate successor of Ishu'-Yab III.

- 21 And after these things Mar Catholicos went down to Bait Qatari, to reconcile its inhabitants, because they had cut themselves off from obedience to the episcopal throne of Riwardashir, which is Fars. He went to the island of Diren [near Bahrain], and its people were reconciled.¹ And he went up from there, and came to this holy monastery, and he brought with him cloths for the altar which had been woven for him in the island of Diren.

—Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors* 2 : 14 (W.-B.*)

¹It seems likely that Thomas has got his facts mixed up. The record of the Synod held by George I at Diren in 676 show that 'Thomas, Bishop Metropolitan of Bait Qatari' was present, together with the Bishops of Diren, Trihan, Mazon (Oman), Hagar and Hatta. It seems clear that Ishu'-Yab III had appointed a separate Metropolitan for Qatar, and that the trouble George had to face was divided loyalty—to Fars, or to the new Metropolitan. The canons of the Synod stress the authority of the Metropolitan. See Chabot, *S.O.* pp. 480-490.

Suggested Order of Creation of Metropolitan Sees

22	Metropolitan City	Province	By Whom and When Created
	Bait Lapat, Gundeshapur [Shahabad]	Elam	Papa, c. 291-325
	Nisibin		Papa, c. 291-325
	Parat Maishan [Basra]	The South, Maishan	Papa, c. 291-325
	Arbil [Hazzah]	Hedayab [Adiabene], Assur [Assyria]	Papa, c. 291-325
	Karka of Bait Salok [Kirkuk]	Bait Garma	Shim'un, c. 325-341

Metropolitan City	Province	By whom and when created
Riwardashir	Fars	Yab-Alaha I, 415-420
Merv		Between 497 and 554
Harat		Shila, 505-523
Halwan [Halah]	Media	Ishu'-Yab II, 628-643
Qatar, Bait Qatari	Qatarbah (?)	Ishu'-Yab III, 650-660
1	Hind [India]	Ishu'-Yab III, 650-660
2	Sin [China]	Saliba-Zakha, 712-728
Samarqand -Y.	Turkestan	Saliba-Zakha 712-728

¹ The metropolitan city of the Province of India is unknown. In *Nestorian Missionary Enterprise*, pp. 94-95, Dr. J. Stewart states that it was at first Gandispur (Shahabad) near Taxila, but this is due to confusion with Gundeshapur in Elam. In *Oriens Christianus* 2 : 1276-1277 Le Quien conjectures that in 1122 it was Patna, but this is based on a fabulous story from a mediaeval chronicle that there was a shrine on the 'River Pison' (Genesis 2 : 11) where St. Thomas was buried, and is totally unreliable. Malabar, or possibly Kalyan near Bombay, are much more likely. When the Patriarch appointed Yab-Alaha Metropolitan in 1503, he sent him to Malabar.

² Dr. John Foster considers it probable that the metropolitan city of the Province of China was Ch'ang-An (Hsi-An), the capital city under the T'ang Dynasty. See 33 and 411.

Christianity in Pakistan and India

The Thomas Tradition

The *Acts of Thomas*, written between 180 and 230 at or near Edessa, are clearly legendary, but may have some historical basis in fact. The following is a summary :

23 When the Apostles had been for a time in Jerusalem, they cast lots to ascertain in which country each should preach, and India fell to the lot of Thomas ; but he was most unwilling to go. Christ appeared to him in a dream and promised him His grace, but he would not go. Christ then sold him as a slave to a merchant named Habban, who carried him away by sea to India. The starting-point of the voyage is not mentioned, but they stop at Andrapolis [on the Nile south of Alexandria] ; and then, proceeding to

India, reach the court of King Gudnaphar who wanted a man to build him a palace. Thomas, introduced as a carpenter, received from the king money for the erection of the palace, but spent it on the poor. The king remonstrated; but miraculous events convinced him that Thomas by spending the money on the poor had built him a palace in heaven. Hence Gudnaphar and his brother Gad became Christians. Thereafter, Thomas went to another kingdom in India, where by order of the king, whose name was Mazdai, he was speared to death by four soldiers.

—*Acts of Thomas* (summarised by Farquhar, *B.J.R.L.* 10, reprint pp. 4-5).

The name Gudnaphar, which Farquhar gives in a Syriac form, is Gondaphoros in Greek, and Vindafarna in Persian. There was a Parthian king of that name who ruled parts of Persia as well as present-day West Pakistan from his capital at Taxila till the Kushan invasion of 51. His brother Gad is also historical. Mazdai seems purely legendary. Compare 3, 4 for details of the route.

An independent Syriac source, written in Edessa about 250, states as follows:

- 24 India and all its countries, and those bordering on it, even to the farthest sea, received the Apostles' hand of priesthood from Judas Thomas, who was Guide and Ruler in the Church which he built there, and ministered there.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles* (Cureton, *A.S.D.* p. 33).

This should be compared with South Indian tradition, as recorded by the Portuguese writer Antonio de Gouvea soon after 1600.

- 25 Starting then from Jerusalem, St. Thomas travelled through various provinces and preached to the Parthians, Medes, and Persians,¹ passed through Arabia and embarked

¹ Although Eusebius and others state that Thoms went to Parthia, there is no local tradition or historical evidence attaching him with any part of the Parthian Empire proper. A cross was found at Taxila, in the Indo-Parthian kingdom of Vindafarna, in 1935 (picture in Barket Ullah, *Muqaddas Toma, Rasul-i-Hind* p. 75).

In the Sassanid period there was a monastery of St. Thomas on an island in the Persian Gulf, lying between Oman and Bahrain (see the discussion in Mingana, *B.J.R.L.* 10, pp. 450-456), and if as late a writer as Barhebraeus is to be trusted, the Province of Fars was later to claim to have been evangelised by the Apostles (see 447). These links with the name of Thomas probably arose from the close connection there undoubtedly was between India, Oman, Bahrain and the Province of Fars between 300 and 650. See 27, 29, 30, 432 and 433.

for India; and after a long voyage landed on the island of Sokotra. Some, however, say he embarked at Basra . . . From the island of Sokotra St. Thomas set sail for the Indies, and the first place which he reached was Kranganur, a noble and famous town at that time, in which dwelt the principal king of Malabar . . . After [he] had planted the Faith in Kranganur, . . . he travelled all over the coast of Malabar, and arrived at length at Coulao [Quilon], where also he stopped, . . . and there he converted several to the Faith. From there he went forward and came to the city of Maliapor [Mailapur near Madras].

After preaching in Mailapur and converting many, Thomas went to China. Gouvea finds this story difficult to believe. In the end Thomas came back to Mailapur, where he incurred the hatred of two Brahmins, and was put to death, being first stoned, and then pierced with a spear.

—Antonio de Gouvea, *Oriental History* (French translation 1609. Moule, C.C.*)

For the tradition that Thomas's bones were removed by a merchant from India to Edessa see 168-169.

For a reference to letters said to be written by Thomas and read in worship in Edessa, see 212.

References to India in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Centuries

The following references to India and Indian Christians are all closely connected with the Church in the Persian Empire.

- 26 During the Patriarchate of Shahlufa and Papa,¹ Dudi [David], Bishop of Basra on the Persian Gulf, an eminent doctor, left his see and went to India, where he evangelised many people.

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard* 1:8 (French in P.O. 4, p. 236. Mingana, B. J. R. L. 10, p. 450).

¹ Mashiha-Zakha, a much earlier writer, makes Papa the first Patriarch. His dates are c. 291-325. Mingana dates the visit of Dudi to India between 295 and 300.

- 27 Signatures of Bishops approving the Creed [of Nicaea, 325]:

Hosius, Bishop of Cordova, and two Presbyters, sign on behalf of the churches of Rome, Italy and Spain; Alexander, Bishop

of Alexandria, and Athanasius his archdeacon, on behalf of the churches in Egypt, Libya and Cyrenaica. Then follow:

Eustatius, Bishop of great Antioch,¹ on behalf of the churches in Coele-Syria² and the whole of Mesopotamia, and in Cilicia also.

John the Persian, on behalf of [the churches] in the whole of Persia, and in the great India³ . . .

Makarios Bishop of Jerusalem, with Eusebius Pamphilius⁴ Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, on behalf of the churches in Palestine, Arabia and Phœnicia.

Other representative signatures follow; then a statement that these men returned home after the Council was over, and handed on the Creed to the churches.

—Geladius of Cyzicus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2:17 (Labbe, *S.C.* 2: cols. 227, 228. Y.)

¹ in Syria, not Pisidia.

² North-west Syria, round about Antioch. Note that the Bishop of Antioch signs for Mesopotamia, including presumably the Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. Compare 383-384.

³ The usual translation, which makes John 'Bishop of Persia and Great India,' cannot be accepted in view of the context. In another account (Labbe, *S.C.* 2: col. 52), John is called 'Bishop of Fars (Persis)'. Even before Fars became a Province with a Metropolitan, it had close connections with the church in India. See 25, note 1.

⁴ The famous Church Historian.

For the account of Thomas Kin'an the merchant, and his charter, see 409-410.

28 This Epistle [Romans] was translated from Greek into Syriac by Mar Kumi¹ . . . with the help of Daniel the Presbyter, the Indian.

—Ishu'-Dad of Merv, *Commentary on Romans*, colophon. (M. D. Gibson, *Horae Semiticae* 5: 2, p. 22.)

¹ The colophon refers to the original translation of the Epistle.—Kumi has been identified with the man who, about 425 in Edessa, translated certain works of Theodore of Mopsuestia into Syriac.

29 Ma'na, who had been designated Metropolitan of Fars, was himself also . . . in the School at Edessa. He came originally from Shiraz. After his designation as Metropolitan he translated from Greek into Syriac the books of Diodore [of Tarsus, fl. 378-394] and Theodore [of Mopsuestia, c. 350-428] . . . This holy man proclaimed the orthodox ['Nestorian'] Faith in the land of Fars . . .

Ma'na also rendered into Persian religious odes, poems and hymns, to be sung by the church. He sent the books he had translated to the Islands of the Sea [Bahrain, etc.] and to India.

Chronicle of Sa'drd 2 : 9 (French in *P.O.* 7, pp. 116-117. Y.)

Mingana dates Ma'na's translation work about 470.

Christians in Asia about 525

Cosmas 'the India-Sailor' was a Greek-speaking merchant of Alexandria, who later became a monk. He was probably a Nestorian, and speaks with high respect of the Patriarch Mar Aba I (540-552) whom he met in Constantinople about 530. He travelled widely in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, Indian Ocean, and Mediterranean Sea, and visited Ethiopia in 525. His information about Christians in Asia is either first-hand or from reliable sources.

- 30 The Gospel has been preached throughout the world [Matthew 24 : 14]. This I state to be a definite fact, from what I have seen and heard in the many places which I have visited.

Even in Taprobane [Ceylon]... there is a church of Christians, with clergy and a body of believers, but I do not know whether there are any Christians in the country beyond it. In the country called Male [Malabar], where the pepper grows, there is also a church, and at another place called Kalliana [Kalyan, Bombay] there is moreover a bishop, who is appointed from Persia.

In the Island of Dios-korides [Sokotra],¹ which is situated in the same Indian Sea, and where the inhabitants speak Greek, having been originally colonists sent there by the Ptolemies who succeeded Alexander the Macedonian,² there are clergy who receive their ordination from Persia, and are sent to the island, and there is also a multitude of Christians. I sailed along the coast of this island, but did not land upon it. I met, however, some of its Greek-speaking people, who had come over into Ethiopia.

¹ Dios-korides is probably equivalent to the Sanskrit 'Dvīpa-Sakhad-nara'—the island abode of bliss'. There were Indian settlers on the island.

² Ptolemy I was one of Alexander's generals, who became King of Egypt.

And so likewise among the Bactrians and Huns and Persians, and the rest of the Indians,³ Persarmenians, Medes and Elamites, and throughout the whole land of Persia there is no limit to the number of churches with bishops and very large communities of Christian people, as well as martyrs, and monks living as hermits.

So too in Ethiopia [Sudan] and Axum [Ethiopia], and in all the country about it; among the people of Happy Arabia [the Yemen], . . . through all Arabia and Palestine, Phoenicia and all Syria . . . there are believers and preachers.

Taprobane is a large oceanic island lying in the Indian Sea, . . . and in it is found the hyacinth stone. It lies on the other side of the Pepper Country [Malabar] . . . The island has also a church of Persian Christians, and a presbyter who is appointed from Persia, and a deacon, and all the apparatus of public worship. But the natives and their kings are heathens. The island . . . is much frequented by ships from all parts of India, and from Persia and Ethiopia, and it similarly sends out many of its own to [various ports in India] and to Sindhu. Sindhu is on the frontier of India, for the River Indus . . . forms the boundary between Persia and India.³

—Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*, from Books 3 and 11 (McC*).

³ These, grouped with various peoples in and bordering on the Persian Empire, are almost certainly the people of present-day West Pakistan. Note that the Indus was the Eastern boundary of the Sassanid Empire.

A Bishop for the White Huns, 551

During the first fifteen centuries A.D., Central Asia was the home of nomadic peoples, who were constantly moving westwards and southwards—Kaishans, Goths, Huns, Turks, and Mongols. The area had to be evangelised again and again.

In the 6th Century the Haftar (Hephthalite or White Huns) inhabited Afghanistan and the banks of the River Oxus, and at times their rule extended as far west as Merv and Harat.

- 31 Khudai the Haftar sent a priest as a messenger to the King of Kings [Khusrau I of Persia, 531-579], and the Haftars, who were Christians, wrote a letter to the Holy Patriarch [Mar Aba I], requesting him to ordain as Bishop to all the

kingdom of the Haftars the priest who was sent from their country. When the priest saw the King of Kings, and the latter learned the nature of the mission on which he was sent, he was astonished to hear it, and amazed at the power of Jesus, and at the fact that even the Christian Haftars counted the Patriarch as their Head and administrator. He therefore ordered him to go and decorate the church as was customary on such occasions, and to ordain Bishop the man whom Khudai the Haftar had sent to him. On the following day the Church was decorated, and the Haftar priest was ordained Bishop for the Haftars, and joy increased with the people of the Lord.

—*Life of Mar Aba* 266-9 (Mingana, *B.J.R.L.* 9, reprint pp. 10-11*).

Conversion of a Turkish King, c. 644

By the 7th Century the Turks had displaced the White Huns, and also lived in the land between the River Oxus and the Chinese Empire. The following account of evangelism among them was written about 680.

- 32 And Elijah, Metropolitan of Merv, converted a large number of Turks . . . It is related that when travelling in the countries situated beyond the border line [of the River Oxus] he was met by a king who was going to fight another king. Elijah endeavoured with a long speech to dissuade him from the fight, but the king said to him : ' If you show me a sign similar to those shown by the priests of my gods, I shall believe in your god.' And the king ordered the priests of the demons who were accompanying him, and they invoked the demons whom they were worshipping, and immediately the sky was covered with clouds, and a hurricane of wind, thunder and lightning followed. Elijah was then moved by Divine power, and he made the sign of the Heavenly Cross, and rebuked the unreal thing that the rebellious demons had set up, and it forthwith disappeared completely. When the king saw what the holy Elijah did, he fell down and worshipped him, and he was converted with all his army. The saint took them to a stream, baptised all of them, ordained for them priests and deacons, and returned to his country.

(Latin in *C.S.C.O.* 3 : 4, pp. 35-36. Mingana, *B.J.R.L.* 9, reprint pp. 11-12.)

The Gospel comes to China, 635

The following account is from a Christian inscription in Chinese, dated 781 (or possibly 779). Its truth is confirmed independently by the Imperial Rescripts of the T'ang Dynasty (see 411).

- 33 At the time of T'ai Tsung, cultured Emperor,
Whose shining glory opened a propitious age,
Who was an enlightened Sage over his people,
In Syria¹ there was a Bishop² named Alo-pen.³
Divining the bright clouds [of the eastern sky] he conveyed
the true Scriptures.

Regarding the music of the wind, he rode through hardship
and danger.

In the ninth year of Cheng-kuan [635] he arrived at
Ch'ang-An.

The Emperor sent the Chancellor, Duke Fang Hsuan-ling,
To lead an escort to the Western Suburb,
And received him as a guest in the Palace.

The Scriptures were translated in the Royal Library,
And their doctrine examined in the Private Apartments.

Knowing well that it was right and true,

The Emperor expressly commanded its propagation.

—*Christian Monument at Ch'ang-An*, lines 81-94 (C.T.D.)

¹ He came from Persia (see 411), but from 661 to 750 the capital of the Caliphate was at Damascus in Syria, and in 745 a Chinese Imperial Rescript changed the nomenclature of Christianity from 'The Persian Scriptural Religion' to 'The Syrian Scriptural Religion'. This usage persisted even after the Muslim capital shifted to Baghdad, possibly to distinguish Christianity from Zoroastrianism and Manicheism.

² Literally 'Lofty Virtue', an honorific title.

³ Possibly the Chinese translation of the Syriac name 'Yab-Alaha' which means 'God-given'.

3. SOUTHWARDS

Pantaenus in Arabia, c. 180

- 34 Pantaenus,¹ ... one of the most eminent teachers of his day, ... was appointed to preach the Gospel of Christ to the peoples of the East, and travelled as far as India,² ...

¹ Pantaenus was probably the teacher of Clement of Alexandria.

² 'India' here means the southern part of the Red Sea, probably the coast of Arabia.

³ This unfortunate use of India arises from the fact that the Persians called the Blacks (the Abyssinians with whom they came into contact in South Arabia) by the name of the dark-skinned people who lived nearest to them, i.e. the Indians. The usage then came to the West through the Syrians.—Bell, *The Origin of Islam in its Christian Environment*, p. 34.

where he appears to have found that Matthew's Gospel had arrived before him and was in the hands of some who had come to know Christ. Bartholomew, one of the Apostles, had preached to them and had left behind Matthew's account in the actual Aramaic characters, and it was preserved till the time of Pantaenus's mission. He himself, after doing great work, ended up as Principal of the Academy in Alexandria, where both orally and in writing he revealed the treasures of the Divine doctrine.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5 : 10. 1-3 (W.)

Frumentius and Edesius in Ethiopia, c. 340

- 35 Meropius, a certain philosopher of Tyre, wanted to go to India¹ . . . He took two boys with him, to whom, as relatives, he was giving a liberal education. The younger was called Edesius, the older Frumentius.

On their way home from the visit, the ship called at a port for provisions, but the treaty with Rome had expired, and hostile people boarded the ship and killed all on board.

The two boys were found studying and doing their lessons under a tree ; the barbarians in pity spared them, and sent them to their king.

The king appointed the two lads to high office ; when he died, the queen appointed Frumentius regent for her young son. He got in touch with Christian traders, allowed them to build churches, helping them to get sites, and asked favours for them from the queen. When the young king came of age, the two men got leave to return home.

Edesius hastened to Tyre, to see his parents and relatives once more ; but Frumentius went to Alexandria, for he said : ' It is not right to hide what the Lord has done.' He told the Bishop all that had happened, and asked him to provide some worthy man, and send him as bishop to the many Christians now gathered, and the churches built, on barbarian soil. Then Athanasius—for he had recently been

¹ See 34 note 2. India here means India or South Arabia. Later on in the passage, the reference is to Ethiopia (Axum).

consecrated Bishop²—along with his Council, gave careful and ready consideration, . . . and then said: 'What other man can we find like you, who has the Spirit of God in him, and who can bring this work to completion?' He ordained him Bishop,³ and decided that he should go back, in the power of God's grace, to the place he had come from. When the Bishop arrived in India, God's gift of grace and courage was, it is said, so great, that he performed apostolic signs, and an infinite number of barbarians was converted. As a result, Christians, churches and a priesthood came into existence in these parts of India.

I came to know about these events not from any ordinary report, but from Edesius himself, who had been Frumentius's companion,⁴ and who was afterwards appointed presbyter at Tyre.

—Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History* 1: 9. P.L. 21, cols. 478-480 (Y.)

² Athanasius was consecrated Bishop of Alexandria in 328. He was in exile in 336-337 and 339-346.

³ For the reference to Frumentius, Bishop of Axum, consecrated by Athanasius, in Constantius's letter of 357, see 344. The date of the consecration was probably between 346 and 350. King Ezana of Axum (325-350) is the first Ethiopian King to have crosses on his coins (*Numismatic Chronicle* 1884, pp. 205 ff.)

⁴ It may be significant that Frumentius had the fellowship of another Christian during his pioneer missionary work.

Theophilus 'the Indian' on the Red Sea Coast, and Beyond, c. 354

Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople from 853, summarises or quotes the following from the now lost *Ecclesiastical History* of the Arian (heretical) Philostorgius, who fl. 354-425.

- 36 Philostorgius relates that the Christians in Central India, who were converted to the Faith of Christ by the preaching of St. Bartholomew, believe that the Son is not of the same substance with the Father [i.e. are Arians]. He adds that Theophilus the Indian, who had embraced this opinion, came to them, and delivered it to them as a doctrine; and also that these Indians are now called Homerites [Himyarites], instead of their old name of Sabeans, which they received from the city of Saba [Sheba], the chief city of the whole nation . . .

He says that Constantius [the Arian Emperor, 337-361] sent ambassadors to those who were formerly called Sabeans,

but are now known as Homerites . . . As to the territory which they inhabit, he says that it is called by the Greeks 'Happy Arabia' [the Yemen]¹ . . . Constantius determined . . . to conciliate the king of that people by magnificent presents and words of gentle persuasion . . . He also asked for licence to build churches for the use of the Romans who came thither by sea, and of the inhabitants of the country who wished to embrace the Christian faith. At the head of this embassy was placed Theophilus the Indian, who had been sent when very young as a hostage from the Divaeans to the Romans, when Constantine was at the head of the Empire. The Island called Divus² is a portion of their territory, and the inhabitants of it are called Indians.

Theophilus became an Arian, and embraced the monastic life. But Constantius made him a bishop, and sent him to Arabia with 200 horses and other gifts.

When Theophilus arrived among the Sabeans, he therefore tried to persuade the ruler of the tribe to become a Christian, and to give up the deceits of paganism. [In spite of strong opposition from the Jews],³ the prince of the nation, by sincere conviction, came over to the true religion, and built three churches in the district . . . out of his private resources. One of these churches he erected in a place called Tapharum, the metropolis of the nation [Zafar, midway between San'a and Aden]. He erected another in the place where the market of the Roman trade stood, lying towards the outer sea: this place is called Adane [Aden], and it is the place where everybody is in the habit of landing when he leaves the Roman territories. The third church he built in another part of the country, where the market of the Persian trade stands [Cana?—see 4], hard by the mouth of the Persian Sea, which lies along these parts.

When Theophilus had dedicated the churches, and adorned them with such decorations as he could, he crossed over to

¹ See 3 note 1.

² Divus is simply the equivalent of the Sanskrit 'dvipa' (island), and is found in such words as 'Dios-korides' (Sokotra), 'Mal-dive', 'Siele-diba' (Ceylon) and 'Diu'. The location of this Divus is uncertain, but the itinerary suggests Sokotra, which was ruled from the part of Arabia due north of it.

³ Compare 408. The Jewish community in the Yemen survived till modern times.

the island of Divus, which, as we have already said, was his native land. From there he made his way to the other districts of India,⁴ and corrected many disorders among the inhabitants. For they listened to the reading of the Gospel in a sitting posture,⁵ and had many other customs which were contrary to the law of God. But Theophilus reformed everything according to the holy usage, as was most acceptable to God, and also confirmed the dogma of the church. For that impious writer [Philostorgius] states that they had no need of correction with regard to the worship of the Divine Being, because from the very beginning they had constantly professed to believe that the Son was of a different substance from the Father.

From this Great Arabia Theophilus proceeded to the Ethiopians who are called Axumites, who dwell along the coast near the entrance of the Red Sea, . . . and, having ordered all things there correctly, he made his way back from there to the territory of the Romans. After his return he was loaded with honours by the Emperor.

—Photius, *Library* 2 : 6 and 3 : 4-6 (Walford*).

⁴ Called 'this Great Arabia' in the next paragraph. Possibly Arabia north of Sokotra, with its main port at Moscha (see 4).

⁵ See 141.

4. NORTHWARDS

Armenia, the First Christian Nation

King Tiridates of Armenia (286-342) was converted through Gregory 'the Enlightener', a Parthian Christian, who became first Bishop of Armenia in 294.

- 37 The Armenians, I understand, were the first [nation] to embrace Christianity. It is said that Tiridates, then the King, . . . became a Christian as a result of a marvellous sign from God which was wrought in his own house ; and that he issued commands to all his subjects, by a herald, to adopt the same religion.

—Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 2 : 8 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

The Conversion of the Goths

In the Third Century the Goths lived to the north of the Black Sea. Later they moved westwards, and in 410 they captured Rome. In 264 raiders crossed the Black Sea to Asia Minor.

- 38 They took a large quantity of prisoners, among whom were many clergy, and they returned to their own country laden with spoils and booty . . . These pious captives, by their intercourse with the barbarians, brought over large numbers of them to the true faith . . . Among these captives were the ancestors of Ulfilas himself, who were of Cappadocian descent.

This Ulfilas . . . became eventually their first Bishop¹ . . . He reduced their language to a written form, and translated into their vernacular tongue all the books of Holy Scripture, except the Books of Kings, because they are a mere narrative of military exploits, and the Gothic tribes were specially fond of war, and were in more need of restraints to check their military passions than of spurs to urge them on to deeds of war!²

—Photius, *Library* 2 : 5 (Walford*).

¹ Ulfilas was consecrated in 341 in the reign of Constantius. He was an Arian. For his Creed see 260. Photius is, as in 36, quoting or summarising Philostorgius.

² For Augustine's comment on the effect of Christianity on the Goths when they captured Rome, see 372.

The Evangelisation of the Western Huns, c. 525-550

Zechariah the Rhetorician wrote a Church History in Greek about 544. This was later translated into Syriac, along with various other documents, by a Syrian Jacobite writer. One of these documents is an account by a Byzantine writer (probably a native of Asia Minor bordering on Armenia), carefully dated the 28th year of the Emperor Justinian (555).

The writer is pointing to the spread of civilisation, especially in the countries to the north of the Byzantine and Persian Empires.

- 39 Even in this northern area there are five Christian nations, and they have twenty-four bishops, and their Catholicos is at the great city of Dwin, in Persian Armenia.¹ The name

¹ The Armenians were 'non-Chalcedonian' (see 285) and had a separate Patriarch. Later his See was at Valanshapat (Etchmiadzin).

of their Catholicos is Gregory, an upright and distinguished man.

Gurzan [Georgia] is another country in that land of Armenia, and its language is like Greek, and they have a Christian ruler, subject to the King of Persia.

Aran² is another country and race in the same Armenia, and its people are baptised believers, and its ruler subject to the King of Persia.

Sisaghan³ is another country and race. Its people are believers, but there are also pagans living there.

Bazgum [Abasgia] is another country and race.

It is the land of the Huns, bordering on the Caspian and Black Seas, and extending towards the territory of the Bulgars. Beyond these nations are wild nomadic peoples.

More than twenty years ago the Huns learned the art of writing in their own language. I shall put down in writing how this happened, under God's direct guidance, as I heard it from reliable people—John of Resh'aina, who was in the monastery of Bait Izhaquni near Amid,⁴ and Thomas the Tanner, who had been forced to join in the flight of Qubad from Persia into the country of the Huns a little more than fifty years ago.⁵ They had remained there for more than thirty years, and married and had children, but at the time I am speaking of they had come back, and gave us the following first-hand report:

The Huns had invaded the Roman Empire and deported a large number of captives. These had been settled in their land for thirty-four years, when an angel appeared to Qaradushat, Bishop of the country of Aran, as he himself has related, and said:

'Go forth with three holy priests into the plain, and receive from me the commands sent to you by the Lord of Spirits.

² Aran was later to become a Nestorian province, with its own Metropolitan at Barda'a. It is not clear whether Bishop Qaradushat was a Nestorian or a Monophysite.

³ The location of Sisaghan is uncertain. It may have lain between Armenia and Abasgia, the land of the Huns.

⁴ Amid was just inside the Byzantine Empire in the reign of Justinian, on the disputed border with Persia and Armenia.

⁵ Qubad, King of Persia, was in exile from his usurping brother Jamasp c. 408-501, but recovered his throne with the help of the Huns, and reigned till 531. He was friendly towards the Christians. See 398.

For I am the Guardian Angel of the captive people who have been deported from the Roman Empire into the lands of the peoples. They have offered their prayer to God, and He has told me what to say to you.'

Qaradushat, whose name means 'called by God', at once obeyed, and three presbyters set out with him. Once again the angel appeared:

'Come and enter the land of the peoples, and baptise the sons of those who are [spiritually] dead, and make priests for them, and give them the Mysteries [sacraments], and confirm them; and lo! I am with you, and will give you mercy here, and you shall do signs among the peoples, and whatever you need you shall find.'

Four others set out with them, and in a turbulent countryside those seven priestly men regularly found hospitality night by night—seven loaves, and a bottle of water. They did not go through the passes, but were led across the mountains. And when they arrived, they preached to these captive people, and baptised many. They also made disciples of some of the Huns. They stayed there seven years, and they translated the Scriptures into the language of the Huns.⁶

Now it so happened that at that time Probus had just been sent there as an ambassador, to gather from among them any who had met the [Hun] tribes in battle. When he heard from the Huns about these saints [the missionaries], and also from the captives, he was filled with enthusiasm, and earnestly desired to see them. He saw them, received their blessing, and showed them great honour in the eyes of the peoples. When our King [the Emperor Justinian] learned from him of the matter as above written, inasmuch as the Lord had brought it to pass in this way, he loaded thirty mules from the territory of the neighbouring Roman cities, and sent them, and likewise both wine and oil and linen cloth and other goods, and sacred vessels. He gave these very beasts of burden as a gift to them, because Probus was a man who was faithful and kind.

Having excelled in this way in good works, he [Qaradushat] passed away at the end of fourteen years. And another

⁶ Unlike the Gothic translation of Ulfilas, this translation is not available today. Translations in Armenian and Georgian are available.

Armenian bishop—his name was Makarios—was both rightly called to go, and went willingly. Some of his priests went with him. He built a church of brick, and planted fields, and sowed different kinds of vegetables, and he performed signs, and baptised many people. When the rulers of the [Hun] peoples saw something new, they were amazed, and they rejoiced exceedingly at their coming, and honoured them, each of them inviting them to his own district and tribe, and asking them to become his teachers. And lo ! they are there to this day. And this is an example of God's mercy. In His care are all everywhere who are His. And the time has now come, because it has been put in His power [Acts 1 : 7] so that, as the Apostle says, he should bring in the fullness of the peoples [Romans 11 : 25].

—Anonymous, Sixth Century (Latin in *C.S.C.O.* 3 : 6, pp. 215-218. Y.)

5. WESTWARDS

Christians in the Roman Empire, and their One Faith

Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons c. 178-200, was a Greek-speaking native of Asia Minor, but speaks first here of the newer churches in the west, where he had made his home.

- 40 The Church, having received this preaching, and this Faith, although scattered throughout the whole world, yet, as if occupying but one house, carefully preserves it. She also believes those points of doctrine just as if she had but one soul, and one and the same heart ; and she proclaims them, and teaches them, and hands them down, with perfect harmony, as if she possessed only one mouth. For although the languages of the world are dissimilar, yet the import of the tradition is one and the same. For the churches which have been planted in Germany have not believed or handed down anything different, nor do those in Spain, nor those in Gaul, nor those in the East, nor those in Egypt, nor those in Libya, nor those which have been established in the central regions of the world.¹

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1 : 10. 1-2 (A.-N.C.L.-S.)

¹ Probably Rome ; possibly Jerusalem.

Numbers of Christians in Rome

The following figures, quoted from a letter of Cornelius, who was Bishop of Rome from 251-253, give some idea of the size of the Christian community there.

- 41 There are forty-six presbyters, seven deacons, seven subdeacons, forty-two acolytes, fifty-two exorcists, readers, and doorkeepers, and more than fifteen hundred widows and distressed persons. All these are supported by the Master's grace and love for men... together with laymen too numerous to count.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6 : 43. 11-12 (W.)

Ireland : Patrick

Patrick was a Briton, the son of a Christian deacon, and was kidnapped by Irish raiders from his father's farm, at the age of sixteen. While in captivity, he himself came to a real faith. At last, after some years, he was able to return home.

- 42 And there indeed I saw in the night visions a man whose name was Victorinus coming as it were from Ireland with countless letters. And he gave me one of them, and I read the beginning of the letter, which was entitled 'The Voice of the Irish.' And... I thought that at that very moment I heard the voice of those who lived beside the wood of Foclut¹ which is near to the Western Sea. And thus they cried, as if with one mouth : 'We beseech you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more.' And I was exceedingly broken in heart, and could read no further. And so I awoke. Thanks be to God that after very many years² the Lord granted to them according to their cry...

Why then in Ireland do those who never had the knowledge of God, but until now only worshipped idols and abominations—how is it that there has been recently prepared a people of the Lord, and they are called children of God? We can see sons and daughters of Scottish³ chieftains becoming monks and virgins of Christ...

¹ The location of Foclut is unknown. The 'Western Sea' may mean the Irish Sea or the Atlantic Ocean.

² Patrick was kidnapped about 405 and escaped about 411. He did not return to Ireland as Bishop till 432, and died in 461.

³ i.e. Irish. The Scots came originally from Ireland.

But I pray . . . that no one may say that it was my ignorance that did whatever trifling matter I did, or proved, in accordance with God's good pleasure ; but judge, and let it be most truly believed, that it was the gift of God. And this is my confession before I die.

—S. Patrick, *Confession*, 23, 41 and 62 (White *).

Scotland : Ninian and Columba

- 43 The holy Columba was born of noble parents . . . In the second year after the battle of Cul-drebene, the forty-second year of his age [563], Columba sailed away from Ireland to Britain, wishing to be a pilgrim for Christ. Devoted even from boyhood to the Christian noviciate and the study of philosophy, [and in Iona¹] living as an island soldier for thirty-four years, he could not pass even the space of a single hour without applying himself to prayer, or to reading, or to writing or some kind of work . . . And with all this he was loving to everyone, his holy face ever showed gladness, and he was happy in his inmost heart with the joy of the Holy Spirit.

—Adamnan, *Life of Columba*, Second Preface (A.O. & M.O. Anderson).

¹ An island off the west coast of Scotland.

Adamnan was Abbot of Iona from 679 to 704. A convenient summary of Columba's work, and a reference to the earlier work of Ninian, is given in the following passage by Bede, who wrote in 731.

- 44 A priest and abbot of outstanding life came from Ireland to preach the word of God in the provinces of the Northern Picts,¹ which are separated from those of the Southern Picts by a range of steep and desolate mountains. The Southern Picts, who live on this side of the mountains, are said to have abandoned the errors of idolatry long before this date, and had accepted the true Faith through the preaching of Bishop Ninian,² a most reverend and holy man of British race, who had been regularly instructed in the mysteries of the Christian Faith in Rome . . . He built a church of stone . . .

¹ Generally thought to mean the Picts living north of the Grampian Mountains, with their capital at Inverness.

² About 400.

Columba . . . converted [the Picts] to the Faith of Christ by his preaching and example, and was granted the island of Iona on which to found a monastery. Iona is a small island . . . Before he came to Britain, he had founded a noble monastery in Ireland . . . From both of these monasteries Columba's disciples went out and founded many others³ in Britain and Ireland ; but the monastery on the isle of Iona, where his body lies, remains the chief of them all.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 3 : 4 (L.S.-P.)

³ Note the part played by monasteries in evangelism.

England : Augustine

The following letter, written in 598 by Pope Gregory the Great, tells of the mission of Augustine to England in 597. It is also an interesting example of partnership between East and West in prayer for missionary work.

45 Gregory to Eulogius, Bishop of Alexandria . . .

Since your good deeds bear fruit in which you rejoice as well as others, I am making you a return for benefits received by sending news of the same kind. And this is that whilst the people of the Angles, placed in an angle¹ of the world, still remained without faith, worshipping stocks and stones, I resolved, aided in this by your prayers, that I ought with God's assistance to send to this people a monk from my monastery to preach. He, by licence given from me, was made Bishop by the Bishops of the Germanies, and with their encouragement he was brought on his way to the people mentioned above, in the ends of the world ; and already letters have reached us telling of his safety and of his work, that both he and those who were sent with him are radiant with such great miracles amongst this people, that they seem to reproduce the powers of the Apostles in the signs that they display. Indeed, on the solemn Feast of the Lord's Nativity now past, more than ten thousand Angles, according to our information, were baptised by the same our brother and fellow-bishop.

¹ Gregory loved play on words. His more famous word-play was : 'They are Angles ; they shall be angels'.

I have told you this, that you may know not only what you do among the people of Alexandria by speaking, but also what you accomplish in the ends of the world by prayer.

—Gregory, *Epistles* 7 : 30 (B. *)

B. METHODS OF EVANGELISM

I. ITINERANT EVANGELISTS AND PUBLIC PREACHING

Justin Martyr in Asia Minor¹

46 I was walking early one morning in the covered walk belonging to the Colonnade,² when a man, with some companions, met me, and said, 'Hullo, Philosopher !' And so saying, he turned and walked along beside me, and his friends turned along with him. I in turn greeted him, and said, 'Well ?'

He answered : 'I was taught . . . that people who wear the sort of dress which you are wearing should not be despised nor neglected³ . . . Do not philosophers occupy all their discussion with the subject of God ? . . . Tell us . . . what belief you have about God and what your philosophy is.'

The speaker is Trypho the Jew. Justin begins by telling the story of his own spiritual quest, and how he found Christ (see 76). Trypho in turn appeals to him to become a Jew, and observe the law. Justin offers to give a reasoned explanation of his faith.

At this his companions . . . burst into laughter and made an unseemly uproar. So I got to my feet and prepared to go off. But he took hold of my coat and said that he would not let me go until I had done what I promised. 'Well,' said I, 'your companions must not make a disturbance nor behave in this rude way. But if they choose to they can listen quietly, or if more important business prevents them, let them go away. I suggest that we should retire some-

¹ Eusebius says it was Ephesus ; internal evidence in the *Dialogue* suggests it was Corinth.

² In the garden behind a Greek gymnasium.

³ Philosophers wore a distinctive robe, like *pirs* and *sadhus*.

where and, having had a rest, finish our argument.' Trypho agreed to follow this plan, and we turned off and went into the space in the middle of the Colonnade, but two of his companions, joking and laughing at our earnestness, went off. When we reached that place where there are stone seats on each side, Trypho's companions sat down on one of them . . . , and they began talking among themselves. When they had finished I began speaking to them again.

A long discussion follows, lasting for two days, conducted in the most friendly spirit. Then, as Justin has to leave next day by ship, Trypho says goodbye, asking that he and his companions may be remembered as friends. They wish him a safe voyage, and he prays for them. Justin ends with these words:

'I urge you to undertake this great struggle for your own salvation and be eager to choose the Christ of the almighty God rather than your own teachers . . . I cannot pray any better prayer for you, my friends, than that you may . . . become what we are.'

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, from 1, 9, 10 and 142 (Hanson).

Justin Martyr in Rome

- 47 The prefect Rusticus said: 'Tell me, where do you meet, or in what place do you gather your disciples?'

Justin said: 'I lodge above in the house of Martin, near the baths of Timothy' . . . And if any wished to come to me, I imparted to him the word of truth.'

—*The Acts of Justin and his Companions*, 3 (Owen-S.*)

¹ The reading is uncertain, and the location of the baths unknown. Public baths, like gymnasiums, were places where many people gathered daily, strategic sites for evangelistic work.

Itinerant Preaching about 250

- 48 As far as they are able Christians leave no stone unturned to spread the faith in all parts of the world. Some, in fact, have done the work of going round not only in cities but even villages and country cottages to make others pious towards God. One could not say that they did this for

the sake of wealth, since sometimes they do not even accept money for the necessities of life, and if ever they are compelled to do so by want . . . , they are content with what is necessary, and no more . . . I admit that at the present time perhaps, when on account of the multitude of people coming to the faith even rich men and persons in positions of honour, and ladies of refinement and high birth favourably regard adherents of the faith, one might venture to say that some become leaders of the Christian teaching for the sake of a little prestige. Yet at the beginning when there was great risk attached particularly to teachers, no such suspicion could be reasonably entertained. Even now, however, the disgrace among the rest of society is greater than the supposed reputation among fellow-believers.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3 : 9 (C.)

Peregrinus, a Bogus Philosopher

Lucian, a second-century pagan writer, tells how Peregrinus came to Palestine, where he learned the 'wondrous lore of the Christians.'

- 49 In a trice he made them all look like children ; for he was prophet, cult-leader, head of the synagogue, and everything, all by himself. He interpreted and explained some of their books and even composed many, and they revered him as a god . . . next after the other, to be sure, whom they still worship, the man who was crucified in Palestine . . . Their first lawgiver [Jesus Christ] persuaded them that they are all brothers, . . . so if any charlatan and trickster, able to profit by opportunities, comes among them, he quickly acquires sudden wealth by imposing upon simple folk.

He was imprisoned, and while in prison got food and money from the Christians. Later a governor who loved philosophy freed him.

He left home, then, for the second time, to roam about, possessing an ample source of funds in the Christians, through whose ministrations he lived in unalloyed prosperity.

—Lucian, *On the Death of Peregrinus* 11, 13 and 16 (Harmon—S.*)

Marks of True and False Preachers

- 50 Let every apostle that comes to you be received as the Lord. And he shall stay one day, and, if need be, the next also, but if he stay three, he is a false prophet. And when the apostle goes forth, let him take nothing save bread, but if he asks for money, he is a false prophet... Not everyone that speaks in the Spirit is a prophet, but if he have the ways of the Lord—by their ways, then, shall the false prophet and the [true] prophet be distinguished. And any prophet that orders a meal in the Spirit shall not eat any of it, otherwise he is a false prophet. And every prophet that teaches the truth—if he does not do what he teaches he is a false prophet... Whoever shall say in the Spirit, 'Give me money, or any other thing'—you shall not listen to him. But if he bid you give for others that are in need, let no man judge him.

—*Didache* 11 : 4-6, 8-10, 12 (Bigg-S.*)

Preaching to a Crowd

What has been described as a second-century historical novel—fiction, but based on contemporary preaching conditions—describes how a man went to hear a notable Christian from Palestine, who was staying in Alexandria, and giving talks about Christianity to interested people.

- 51 And I came, and stood with a crowd which was standing around, and listened to his words. I came to the conclusion that he was speaking the truth, not with dialectic skill, but setting forth in an artless way and without preparation, what he had both heard and seen... And even from the crowd standing around he produced many witnesses in support of what he was saying. But while the crowds welcomed what he was guilelessly saying, the philosophers, whose motives were from secular culture, fell to laughing and scoffing at him, making jokes and pulling to pieces with immoderate assurance... But he thrust aside their trifling, and was not for accepting combat with their artful questioning, but undaunted, did not break off from what he had to say. 'Why is it,' one of them puts the question, 'that the mosquito, being smallest in size, and having six feet, should have wings as well, while an elephant, the largest of

beasts, being wingless, of feet has only four?' . . . 'I could make deductions,' said the preacher, 'for your problems, flippant as they are, if you questioned for love of truth.'

—*Clementine Homilies* 1 : 9, 10 (A.A.)

Bazaar Preaching as seen by a Pagan Critic

In the following passage Origen quotes the second-century critic Celsus, who tries to show bazaar preaching in its worst light. Origen in his own reply admits that Christians preach to common people, but claims that they preach to philosophers as well.

- 52 We see also those who in the market-places make most disreputable displays and draw a crowd. They would not presume to approach a gathering of knowledgeable people nor among such make a display of their stuff. But whenever they see youngsters, and a mob of domestics, and a throng of witless folk, there they push themselves in and show off.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3 : 52 (A.A.)

Preaching and the Problem of Language

In the Roman Empire, language was not generally a problem, as Greek was so widely known. But there were problems in outlying provinces, like Gaul, and of course outside the Empire.

An Asian Missionary in Gaul

Irenaeus was a Greek-speaking missionary from Asia Minor. Much of his preaching was to illiterates.

- 53 We spend our days among the Celts, and are busy for the most part with a barbarous language. So you will not look to us for a skill in words which we have not acquired, nor for ability in writing which we have not practised . . .

Many barbarous people believe in Christ. They have not a sheet of paper, nor a drop of ink, but they do have salvation written by the Spirit in their hearts, and they carefully guard the ancient tradition¹ . . . Without letters, they

¹ See also 235.

have believed this Faith, barbarians as to language, but wise indeed as to doctrine and manner of life.

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1 : 1 and 3 : 4 (T.C.A.).

A Scottish Missionary in England

At the invitation of King Oswald of Northumbria, Aidan was sent from Iona to preach the Gospel. He was a Scot (originally from Ireland) and his language would be Gaelic. The Northumbrians were Angles, and spoke Old English.

- 54 The King always listened humbly and readily to Aidan's advice, and diligently set himself to establish and extend the Church of Christ throughout his kingdom. And while the bishop, who was not yet fluent in the English language, preached the Gospel, it was most delightful to see the King himself interpreting the word of God to his thanes and leaders ; for he himself had obtained perfect command of the Scottish tongue during his long exile.

—Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 3 : 3 (L.S.-P.).

For examples of the pioneer work of missionaries in reducing barbarian languages to writing and translating the Scriptures, see especially the stories of Ulfilas (38) and Qaradushat (39).

Public Exorcism and Healing

- 55 Some do, really and truly, cast out demons, so that those very ones who have been cleansed from evil spirits often believe, and are in the Church . . . What is more, as I said, even the dead have been raised and remained with us for considerable years. What more ? It is impossible to mention the number of gifts which throughout the whole world the Church has received from God in the name of Jesus Christ who was crucified under Pontius Pilate . . . Nor does the Church do anything by angelic invocations, nor incantations, nor other perverse meddling. It directs prayers in a manner clean, pure, and open, to the Lord who made all things, and calls upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 2 : 32 (A.A.).

- 56 And now you may learn from what goes on under your own eyes. For many devil-possessed all over the world, and in your own city, many of our men, the Christians have exorcised in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate . . . In the name of this same Son of God, first born of every creature, who was born of a virgin, and became man subject to suffering, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, . . . and died, and rose again from the dead, every demon exorcised is conquered and subdued.

—Justin Martyr, *II Apology* 6, and *Dialogue with Trypho* 85 (A.A.).

- 57 Some there are who show signs of having received through this Faith something the more incredible. I mean by the cures which they perform, calling upon nought else, over those who need their healing, than the God who is over all and the name of Jesus, along with the account concerning Him.¹ For by these means we ourselves have seen many set free from grievous symptoms and distractions and madness, and ten thousand things beside, which neither men nor demons had cured. . . . Not a few Christians exorcised sufferers, and that without manipulations and magic or the use of drugs, but just by prayer and an invocation of the simpler kind, and such means as the simpler kind of man might be able to use. For it is mostly people quite untrained who do this work.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3 : 24 and 7 : 4 (A.A.).

¹ Note the emphasis here and in the other passages on the simplicity of the method of exorcism, and of its use of a simple form of the Creed about the Crucified and Risen Saviour..

For exorcism as a proof that the Gospel is true, see also 92.

Gregory 'the Wonder-Worker' in Pontus, c. 250

- 58 At daybreak the crowd would be at the doors, men, women, and children, those suffering from demon-possession, or other afflictions or illnesses of the body. And he in the midst would, in the power of the Spirit, apportion as befitted the need of each of those who had come together. He would preach, he would join an enquiry, he would advise, he would teach, he would heal. It was above all for this that he drew

the numbers to the preaching, that sight corresponded with hearing, and that it was through both sight and hearing that the tokens of the Divine power shone forth upon him. For his discourse would astonish their hearing, and his wonders among the sick their sight. The mourner used to be cheered, the youth taught self-control, the aged be tended with fitting words. Slaves were taught to act dutifully towards masters, those in authority to be kind to men under them, the poor that virtue is the one wealth, the property which all are in a position to have a chance at. The rich man was urged to have a care for others, and that he was the steward of possessions rather than the owner of them.

—Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of Gregory the Wonder-Worker* (A.A.).

For Gregory's own conversion, see 79.

Shahlufa of Arbil, c. 270

59 Shahlufa [Bishop of Arbil, 258-273] grew more and more aflame with the ardour of God's love ; it was he who baptised the inhabitants of the village of Tell-Niaha into the religion of the Blessed Trinity. He did this by a miracle, by means of which the Saviour was pleased to demonstrate that His servant was speaking the truth.

One of the headmen of the village, called Nakkiha, was seriously ill with dysentery. As his illness only went on increasing daily, and no one in his village was found who was able to cure him, his parents took him to the city of Arbil. Now St. Shahlufa was told of this by a Divine vision. As the blessed Ananias went [to Paul], Shahlufa went to visit him, at a time when all the relatives who had come with him were assembled. He promised them that he would heal him completely of the disease, if they did all he asked of them ; and he began to expound the Christian faith, proving it from the Divine Books and from the rapidity of its propagation throughout the world. He showed them that Jesus, crucified by the Jews in Jerusalem, is God, Son of God, and that He suffered only of His own free choice, and in order to deliver us from slavery to demons. All agreed with what he said, and promised him that if he proved the truth of his words by healing Nakkiha, they would believe, have themselves baptised, and enter into the

bosom of the holy Church. St. Shahlufa began to pray and healed this incurable disease by the sign of the Cross for everything is easy for God. A great number of the inhabitants of the village believed the word of God, and received baptism.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 32-33. (French in *Mishana, S.S. 1*, pp. 109-110. Y.)

Aidan, a Missionary Bishop in England, c. 640

- 60 He gave his clergy an inspiring example of self-discipline and continence, and the highest recommendation of his teaching to all was that he and his followers lived as they taught. He never sought or cared for any worldly possessions, and loved to give away to the poor whatever he received from kings or wealthy folk. Whether in town or country, he always travelled on foot unless compelled by necessity to ride, and whenever he met anyone, whether high or low, he stopped and spoke to them. If they were heathen, he urged them to be baptised; and if they were Christians, he strengthened their faith, and inspired them by word and deed to live a good life and to be generous to others . . . All who accompanied him, whether monks or lay-folk, were required to meditate, that is, either to read the Scriptures or learn the Psalms. This was their daily occupation wherever they went . . . If wealthy people did wrong, he never kept silent out of respect for their position but corrected them outspokenly. Nor would he offer money to influential people, although he offered them food whenever he entertained them as host. But if the wealthy ever gave him gifts of money, he either distributed it for the needs of the poor, . . . or else used it to ransom any who had been unjustly sold as slaves. Many of those whom he had ransomed in this way later became his disciples, and when they had been instructed and trained, he ordained them to the priesthood.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 3 : 5 (L.S.-P.).

For Aidan, see also 54.

2. OTHER METHODS OF EVANGELISM

Evangelism among the Educated Classes, and its Risks

61 At Alexandria there was no one dedicated to elementary Christian teaching, as everyone had fled the threatened persecution. So while Origen was given up to his studies, as he himself tells us, . . . he was approached by some pagans who wished to hear the word of God.

These included Plutarch, afterwards a martyr, and Heracles, later to become Bishop of Alexandria. Origen took risks, but God protected him.

Because of his fearlessness and extreme enthusiasm for the word of Christ he was at that time the target of plotters. So bitter was the hostility of unbelievers to him that they actually collected groups of soldiers and posted them around the house where he was living, because of the number of those whom he was instructing in the rudiments of the holy Faith. Thus the persecution against him grew hotter and hotter, so that there no longer was room for him anywhere in the city. He moved from house to house, driven from pillar to post, in revenge for the number of those whom he brought to hear his religious teaching. [His life matched his words]. That was the reason why, aided by the power of God, he led men in thousands to share his enthusiasm.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6 : 3 (W.).

Internal evidence of style suggests that Eusebius, writing 100 years later, was copying or adapting a written source.

The Bishop who seemed too Busy for a Serious Enquirer

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, was so busy with the daily claims of pastoral work, that Augustine did not feel free to pour out his intellectual and moral problems before him, and ask his advice.

62 I could not request of him what I wanted as I wanted it, because I was debarred from hearing and speaking to him by crowds of busy people to whose infirmities he devoted himself. And when he was not engaged with them—which was never for long at a time—he was either refreshing his body with necessary food or his mind with reading. Now, as he read, his eyes glanced over the pages and his heart

searched out the sense, but his voice and tongue were silent. Often when we came into his room—for no one was forbidden to enter, nor was it his custom that the arrival of visitors should be announced to him—we would see him thus reading to himself. After we had sat for a long time in silence—for who would dare interrupt one so intent?—we would then depart... I could find no opportunity of putting the questions I desired, ... unless it was a matter that could be dealt with briefly. However, those surgings of me required that he should give me his full leisure, so that I might pour them out to him; but I never found him so

—Augustine, *Confessions* 6 : 3-4 (L.C.C.).

¹ It was customary in those days to read aloud.

Evangelism by Humble Christians

The following statement by Celsus, an opponent of Christianity, gives a picture of evangelism by lay Christians among simple people in the second century, which is as vivid as it is important.

- 63 We see in private houses, workers in wool and leather, washermen, and persons of the most uneducated and rustic kind. They would not venture to open their mouths in the presence of their elders or their wiser masters. But they get hold of the children privately and any women who are as ignorant as themselves. Then they pour out wonderful statements: 'You ought not to heed your father, or your teachers. Obey us. They are foolish and stupid; neither know nor can do anything really good, being busied with empty trifles. We alone know how men ought to live. If your children do as we say, you will be happy yourselves and make your home happy also.' While they are speaking they see one of the school-teachers approaching, or one of the more educated class, or even the father himself... So they whisper, 'With him here we can't explain, ... but if you like, you can come with the women and your playmates to the women's quarters in the leather-shop or the laundry that you may get all there is.'¹ With words like these, they win them over.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3 : 55 (A.A.).

¹ Literally 'learn perfection'.

Evangelisation by Women

- 64 The wife, . . . called from among the heathen to the exercise of some eminent heavenly virtue, is, by the visible proofs of some marked [Divine] favour, a terror to her pagan husband, so as to make him less ready to annoy her, less active in laying snares for her, less diligent in playing the spy over her.¹ He has felt 'mighty works'; he has seen experimental evidences; he knows that she is changed for the better: thus even he himself is, by his fear, a candidate for God. Thus men of this kind, with regard to whom the grace of God has established a familiar intimacy, are more easily won (for Christ).

—Tertullian, *To his Wife* 7 (A.-N.C.L.*).

¹ Tertullian is contrasting a non-Christian husband whose wife has been converted with a pagan who marries a Christian woman.

- 65 I should like to have you¹ showing zeal for the gods and trying to bring men to worship them; and yet not surprised if among those who have lately come to take part in sacrifice, someone thinks what he did rather dreadful, and approves once more of refusing to sacrifice. When men are out of doors, they listen to your plea for the only right course, and they come to the altars. But when a man gets home, his wife and her tears and the night plead otherwise, and draw him away from the altars.

—Libanius, *Letters*, 557 (K.2).

¹ Libanius, a pagan writer, was writing to the Emperor Julian, who in 362 tried to restore paganism.

- 66 Heavens! What women you Christians have!

Libanius, quoted in Chrysostom, *Letter to a Young Widow* (D.C.B. article on John Chrysostom).

- 67 'Go your way; as you live, it cannot be that the son of these tears should perish.'

—Augustine, *Confessions* 3: 21 (L.C.C.).

These words were spoken to Augustine's mother, Monnica, by a North African bishop. For Monnica see also 86.

For other examples of the part played by women in evangelism see 63, 81, 93, 180, 181.

Evangelism through Changed Lives

- 68 We who used to find our pleasures in fornication, now kiss Chastity alone. We who used magical arts, have now devoted ourselves to the good and unbegotten God. We who loved more than anything being men of means, now bring what we have to a common fund and communicate to the needy. We were haters and murderers of one another; and when it came to foreigners, with different social customs, we could not make a common home. But now since the revelation of Christ we share the same manner of life, we pray for our enemies, and seek to win over those who unjustly hate us. Lest you should think that we are just making a case, here are a few of Christ's teachings . . .

He has urged us by patience and meekness to lead all from shame and the lust of evil. And this we have to show in the case of many that have come in contact with us, who were overcome and changed from violent and tyrannical characters, either from having watched the constancy of their neighbours' lives, or from having observed the wonderful patience of companions of the road under unjust exactions, or from the trial they made of those with whom they were concerned in business.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 14 and 16 (A.A.).

For an example of civilised habits of agriculture being introduced among barbarian nomads by a Christian missionary, see 39.

3. PREPARATION OF CONVERTS AND ENQUIRERS

The Teaching of Polytheists

- 69 Since there are many steps by which one mounts to the home of truth, it is not easy for anyone to reach the top. For when lights are dazzling one with the brightness of the truth, if one does not keep a firm foothold, down one rolls to the bottom again. Now the first step is to understand religions which are false, and to cast aside the impious worship of gods made with hands. The second step is to perceive with the mind the fact that God is one, most high, whose power and providence made the world from the

beginning, and direct it towards a future. The third step is to know His Servant and Messenger, whom He sent on embassy to earth.

—Lactantius, *On the Anger of God* 2 (A.A.).

The Testing and Preparation of Enquirers

Origen does not give a systematic account of the instruction of catechumens, but it is clear from the following extracts from his replies to Celsus that it was a thorough teaching, grounded on exposition of both Old and New Testaments, including denunciation of polytheism, stress on the importance of knowing God and worshipping Christ as Creator and Propheted One, teaching about demons and angels, ethical instruction, a doctrine of the Apostolic Church, and teaching about how to pray.

70 At the beginning when we call men to be cured we encourage sinners to come and hear words which teach them not to sin, and the unwise to hear words which will implant in them understanding, and children to advance to a manly character, and those, who are in a word wretches, to happiness, or, to use a more appropriate word, to blessedness. But when some of those who have been thus encouraged make progress and show that they have been purified by the Word, and do all in their power to live better lives, then we call them to our mysteries. (59)

It is not wicked men who are persuaded by this gospel so much as the more simple-minded and—as the multitude would say—the unsophisticated. For these men try to devote themselves to the Christian religion out of fear of threatened punishments, . . . not yet able to see what ought to be chosen for its own sake. (78)

We do not teach that in order that the unrighteous man may be accepted by God it is enough for him to humble himself, conscious of his wickedness. It is only if after condemning himself for his past life he walks humbly for the past and orderly for the future, that God will accept him. (62)

As far as they can, Christians previously examine the souls of those who want to hear them [become 'hearers' or catechumens], and test them individually beforehand; when before entering the community the hearers seem to have devoted themselves sufficiently to the desire to live a good

life, then they introduce them. They privately appoint one class consisting of recent beginners who are receiving elementary instruction and have not yet received the sign that they have been purified [baptism], and another class of those who, as far as they are able, make it their set purpose to desire nothing other than those things of which Christians approve¹ . . . Some are appointed to enquire into the lives and conduct of those who want to join the community, in order that they may prevent those who indulge in secret sins from coming to their common gathering ; those who do not do this they wholeheartedly receive, and make them better every day. (51)

We inculcate a scorn of idols and all images, and in addition to this we raise their thoughts from serving created things in the place of God and lift them up to the Creator² of the universe. We prove clearly that He was the one prophesied by quoting both from the prophecies about Him—and there are many of them—and from the Gospels and the utterances of the Apostles, which are carefully explained by those who are able to understand them intelligently. (15)

Christians have learned that their eternal life consists in knowing that only true supreme God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent [John 17 : 3]. They have learnt that 'all the gods of the heathen' [Psalm 96 : 5] are gluttonous demons who . . . deceive those who have not fled for refuge to the supreme God. They understand that the Divine and holy angels are of a character other than that of . . . the demons. (37)

We, by readings of the Bible and explanations of the readings, encourage men to be pious towards the God of the universe and the virtues that share piety's throne. (50)

When we tell stories about Jesus, we give a powerful defence to show why they happened. We argue that God wanted to establish the doctrine spoken by Jesus which brought salvation to men ; and it was strengthened by the Apostles who were, so to speak, foundations of the building of Christianity which He was beginning to build, and it is increasing even in recent times. (28)

We teach everyone . . . to realise the smallness of man in comparison with the greatness of God, and to ask Him

¹ This may mean a post-baptismal instruction class.

² i.e. Jesus Christ, the Word (John 1 : 3).

always for the needs of our nature, since He alone is able to complete our deficiencies. (64)

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3, sections as indicated above (C.*).

The account by Hippolytus of the practice in Rome about 200 lays more stress on the testing than on the teaching.

- 71 New converts to the faith, who are to be admitted as hearers of the word, shall first be brought to the teachers before the people assemble. And they shall be examined as to their reason for embracing the faith, and they who bring them shall testify that they are competent to hear the word. Inquiry shall then be made as to the nature of their life; whether a man has a wife or is a slave. If he is the slave of a believer and he has his master's permission, then let him be received; but if his master does not give him a good character, let him be rejected. If his master is a heathen, let the slave be taught to please his master, that the word be not blasphemed. If a man has a wife or a woman a husband [instruct them to be content with one another]. But if a man is unmarried, let him be instructed to abstain from impurity, either by lawfully marrying a wife or else by remaining as he is. But if a man is possessed with demons, he shall not be admitted as a hearer until he is cleansed.

Enquiry has to be made about the professions of enquirers. Pandars, actors, charioteers, gladiators, heathen priests, soldiers, military commanders, magistrates, enchanters, must give up their professions or be rejected. Sculptors must stop making idols. A slave-concubine who has been faithful to her master may be accepted, but a man who has a concubine must marry legally or be rejected.

Let catechumens spend three years as hearers of the word. But if a man is zealous and perseveres well in the work, it is not the time but his character that is decisive.¹

When the teacher finishes his instruction, the catechumens shall pray by themselves, apart from the believers . . . At the close of their prayer, when their instructor lays his hand upon the catechumens, he shall pray and dismiss them . . .

Those who are to be set apart for baptism shall be chosen after their lives have been examined: whether they have

¹ Three years was probably the maximum time; usually it was less.

lived soberly, whether they have honoured the widows, whether they have visited the sick, whether they have been active in well-doing. When their sponsors have testified that they have done these things, then let them hear the Gospel.

From that time on they are to be separated from the other catechumens. It is probable that it was after about six weeks' further instruction that they were baptised.

—Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition*, from 16-20 (Easton).

The Purpose of Memorising a Creed

Cyril, Bishop of Jerusalem from 350 to 386, regularly prepared catechumens for baptism at Easter. Part of the preparation was to memorise a Creed prepared by Cyril.

- 72 But in learning the Faith and professing it, acquire and keep that only which is now delivered to you by the Church, and what has been built up strongly out of all the Scriptures. For since not all can read the Scriptures, some being hindered from knowing them by lack of education, and others by lack of leisure, in order that the soul may not perish from ignorance, we sum up the whole doctrine of the Faith in a few lines. This summary I want you both to commit to memory when I recite it, and to rehearse it with all diligence among yourselves, not writing it out on paper, but engraving it by the memory upon your heart. . . . I want you to keep this as a provision through the whole course of your life, and besides this to receive no other. . . . So for the present listen while I simply say the Creed, and commit it to memory ; but at the proper season expect [to be taught] the confirmation out of Holy Scripture of each part of the contents.

—Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catecheses* 5 : 12 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

The Commandments and the Christian Life

'The Two Ways', as the following summary of Christian moral teaching is usually called, is found in its earliest form in the *Doctrina* (95-100), and in a more developed form in the *Didache* (c. 100) and the *Letter of Barnabas* (c. 140). It shows

the use made in training catechumens of teaching based on the Ten Commandments, adapted to the circumstances of the times, and with a stress on the importance of worship and Christian giving.

73 There are Two Ways, one of Life and one of Death . . .

The Way then of Life is this : Firstly, you shall love God who made you.¹ Secondly, you shall love your neighbour as yourself, and whatever you would not have done to yourself, do it not to another . . . Bless those who curse you, and pray for your enemies . . . Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts . . . Give to everyone who asks you, and do not ask it back ; for the Father's will is that we should give to all from His own gifts . . .

And the second commandment of the teaching is this : You shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not corrupt boys, you shall not steal, you shall not use magic, . . . you shall not procure abortion, nor kill the new-born child. You shall not covet your neighbour's goods . . . You shall not bear false witness, you shall not slander, you shall not nurse a grudge . . . Your word shall not be false or empty, but fulfilled in deed. You shall not be . . . extortionate, nor a hypocrite, nor spiteful, nor arrogant . . . You shall hate no man, but some you shall reprove, and for some you shall pray, and some you shall love more than your soul.

My child, flee from all evil and from all that is like it. Do not be bad-tempered, . . . lustful, . . . nor a filthy talker . . . Be not an enchanter, . . . a liar, . . . nor a lover of money . . . Be not a murmurer, for it leads to blasphemy . . . But be meek, . . . long-suffering, and merciful, and quiet, and good . . . You shall keep company with the just and the lowly. The providences that befall you, you shall welcome as good, knowing that without God nothing comes to pass.

My child, night and day you shall remember him that speaks to you the word of God, and you shall honour him . . . And daily shall you seek the faces of the saints, that you may rest on their words. You shall not desire division, but set at peace those who strive . . . Be not one who holds out his hands to receive and shuts them when it comes to

¹ No attempt is made here to give the Scripture references, most of which are well-known. They are noted in Index 1.

giving... You shall not hesitate to give, nor shall you murmur when you give... You shall not take your hand off your son, or your daughter, but from youth up you shall teach them the fear of God. You shall not give orders to your slave, man or woman, in a spirit of bitterness, lest they fear not the God who is over both : for He is not coming to call according to respect of persons, but on those whom the Spirit prepared. And you, servants, shall be subject to your masters...

You shall not forsake the commandments of the Lord, but shall keep what you received... You shall confess your transgressions in church, and shall not come to your prayer with a bad conscience. This is the Way of Life.

But the Way of Death is this...

—*Didache*, from 1-5 (*T.S.* No. 13a*).

The Works of the Faith

The following summary of moral teaching, which follows the Creed given in 241, shows adaptation to a Persian environment in the Fourth Century.

- 74 And that a man should separate himself from observing hours and sabbaths and months and seasons ; and enchantments and divinations and astrology and magic ; and from fornication and from revelling and from vain doctrines, the weapons of the Evil One ; and from the blandishment of honeyed words ; and from blasphemy and from adultery ; And that no man should bear false witness, and that none should speak with double tongues—

These are the works of the Faith that is laid on the true Rock, which is the Messiah, upon whom all the building rises.

—*Afrahat*, *Demonstration* 1 : 19 (Burkitt, *E.E.C.**).

The Christianising of Pagan Customs

The attitude of the Church to pagan customs was not wholly negative, as the following letter, written by Pope Gregory the Great to Abbot Mellitus in 601, shows.

75 We wish you to inform [Augustine] that the temples of the idols . . . should on no account be destroyed. He is to destroy the idols . . . For if these temples are well built, they are to be purified from devil-worship, and dedicated to the service of the true God . . . And since they have a custom of sacrificing many oxen to devils, let some other solemnity be substituted in its place . . . They may kill them for food to the praise of God, and give thanks to the Giver of all gifts for His bounty. If people are allowed some worldly pleasures in this way, they will more readily come to desire the joys of the Spirit. For it is certainly impossible to eradicate all errors from obstinate minds at one stroke, and whoever wishes to climb to a mountain top climbs gradually step by step, and not in one leap. It was in this way that God revealed Himself to the Israelite people in Egypt, permitting the sacrifices formerly offered to the Devil to be offered thenceforward to Himself instead.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 1 : 30 (L. S.-P.).

C. ACCOUNTS OF CONVERSION

1. JUSTIN MARTYR, c. 130

Justin, a Greek from Neapolis (Nablus) in Palestine, believed that 'genuine philosophy . . . alone leads us and commends us to God'. He had a long search before he came to the truth.

76 I attached myself to a Stoic teacher.¹ And when I had studied a long time with him, since no further information about God came to me—for he was not a believer in God himself and he did not think this doctrine essential—I rid myself of this teacher and went to another, who called himself a Peripatetic² and had a reputation as a shrewd man. And when he had put up with me for the first few days he decided then that the scale of his fees should be determined, so that our association should not be without profit. That was why I left him . . . I moved on to . . . a Pythagorean³ . . . He said 'Well? Have you studied music and

¹ Stoics taught that God was a finer matter immanent in the material universe.

² A follower of Aristotle.

³ Pythagoras believed in the Transmigration of Souls.

astronomy and geometry ? . . . ' He sent me away, because I had acknowledged that I did not know them . . . It occurred to me to try the Platonists,⁴ for their fame was considerable. And consequently I constantly associated with a very learned man who had recently come to live in our town,⁵ and I was making progress and improving more and more every day. Their conception of the bodiless things was attracting me greatly and the contemplation of the Ideas was exciting my mind and I thought that I had become wise in a short time, and in my stupidity I hoped to have a vision of God straight away . . .

Now when I was in this state of mind, intending to be filled with a great tranquility and 'to shun the haunt of men',⁶ I made a journey to a place which was not far from the sea. When I was near the spot where I intended to be quite alone, an old man whose appearance was not beneath notice and who gave the impression of possessing a gentle and respectable character, began almost shadowing me.

At first, Justin rather resents the old man's intrusion, but they soon begin to discuss philosophy. The old man soon shatters Justin's confidence in his knowledge by pointing out that you cannot know God through philosophy, and showing some of the limitations of Plato and Pythagoras. Astonished at this, and feeling that the old man has an assurance that he lacks, Justin asks if he would recommend a teacher. The old man replies :

' There were men a very long time ago more ancient than those who are reputed to be philosophers, blessed and righteous and dear to God. They spoke by a Divine Spirit and they oracularly predicted future events which are now taking place. They are called prophets. They alone saw the truth and declared it to men ; they did not suffer from timidity nor embarrassment nor were they influenced by ambition, but they spoke only those things which they had heard and seen when they were filled with a holy Spirit. Their writings remain to this day, and it is possible for anyone who studies them to gain much enlightenment about first principles and the final consummation . . . Furthermore they deserved to be believed because of the miracles which they

⁴ Plato taught that knowledge of the ' Idea of the Good ' (God) was possible through the intellect.

⁵ See 46, note 1.

⁶ A quotation from Homer.

performed, since they were glorifying God the Creator and Father of the universe, and they were announcing the Christ coming from Him, His Son . . . You should pray above all that the gates of light may be opened to you, for these things are not intelligible and comprehensible to everybody unless God and His Christ give understanding to a man.'

This man told me these facts, and many others, . . . and then departed, . . . and I never saw him again. Immediately a fire was lit in my soul, and a desire for the prophets seized me, and for those men who are friends of Christ ; as I turned over his words in my mind I found this the only reliable and profitable philosophy. In fact, this is the way and these the means whereby I am a philosopher. I would like everybody to conceive a determination equal with mine not to abandon the doctrines of the Saviour. For they include among them a certain menace, and they are sufficient to discourage those who are turning away from the right road, and also the most delightful refreshment exists for those who practise them. If, therefore, you are concerned about yourself and are anxious to gain salvation, . . . it is possible for you to know God's Christ, to become initiated,⁷ and to be happy.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, from 2, 3, 7 and 8 (Hanson).

⁷ i.e. baptised.

It is clear also that Christian martyrs impressed Justin.

- 77 For I myself, when I was delighting in the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death, and of all other things which are counted fearful, perceived that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure.

—Justin Martyr, *II Apology* 12 (A.-N.C.L.).

2. TATIAN 'THE ASSYRIAN', c. 150

Tatian was from the East ; he belonged to 'Assyria' ; in his search for truth he examined Greek thought, was initiated into a 'Mystery Religion', and saw the debased religion of the temples at Rome. Finally, after contact with Justin Martyr, he was converted to Christianity. (For his *Diatessaron* see 10).

- 78 With my thoughts bent upon these weighty themes, I chanced to come across certain barbarian¹ Scriptures, too old to compare with the teaching of the Greeks, too Divine to compare with their error. I came to put my trust in these, because there was no conceit about their style, nor anything artificial about the speakers, the composition of it was easy to understand, things to come were foreknown, the messages given beyond expectation, and all things had one guiding principle. And, my soul taught of God, I understood that there are some things which tend towards condemnation, but others which set free from the bondage that is in the world, and snatch us from rulers many, yes, from ten thousand tyrants.²

—Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, 29 (A.A.).

¹ i.e. non-Greek. Tatian was writing to Greeks. He means the Old Testament.

² By finding the one true God, he was delivered from the pagan worship of many gods.

3. GREGORY 'THE WONDER-WORKER', 234

Gregory belonged to Pontus; his family planned that he should enter the Roman Civil Service. He wondered whether to go to Rome or Beirut to study law, but the arrival of a military escort to take his sister to Caesarea, to join her husband who was on the staff of the Roman Governor of Palestine, made him decide to go with her first.

- 79 Everything pushed me—doing right by my sister, the matter of my own education; what is more, the soldier—I ought to mention this—bringing a permit for more public vehicles than were necessary, and travel warrants for us in larger number than my sister alone could account for. These were the surface reasons. Less obvious but truer [in God's providence] were—fellowship with this man,¹ education by him in the truth concerning the Word,² and the profit of my soul to salvation. It was for these that, blind and ignorant, I was guided hither—for my part, savingly. So then it was not that soldier, but a certain Divine Companion, good Guide and Guard, who was lead-

¹ i.e. Origen.

² i.e. Jesus Christ.

ing me safely along . . . till He brought me and settled me here.

In Caesarea he was attracted by the great Christian scholar and teacher, Origen, and became his pupil. He was taught logic, geometry, physics, ethics, literature, philosophy—and, at a later stage, the Bible, and Christian Doctrine. And something happened.

Like some spark it came dropping into my inmost soul. And there, being kindled and catching fire, was love: love towards the Word Himself, most alluring to all by reason of beauty unspeakable, the holy, the most lovely. And love towards this man, His friend and representative. By this love sore wounded, I was induced to give up all the aims which I was proposing to myself, for my affairs and education, among other things, even the law-studies of which I was proud; yes, fatherland³ and family, both relatives in Caesarea and those left behind at home. I had one regard, one passion—theology, and this godlike man, master in it.

—Gregory the Wonder-Worker, *Address to Origen (A.A.)*.

³ Later Gregory was to return to Pontus, and become the means of conversion of his own people. See 58.

4. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE, 246

Cyprian came of a wealthy family in the north African town of Carthage (near modern Tunis).

- 80 While I was still lying in darkness and gloomy night, tossing in the sea of this world, floundering this way and that, and wavering on a blundering course, knowing nothing of my own life, a stranger to truth and light, I used to think it difficult—as my manner of life then was, utterly distasteful—[to believe], what the tenderness of God was offering me for my salvation, that it should be possible for anyone to be born anew, and in the washing of water be quickened to new life. ‘How,’ I would contend, ‘is such a conversion possible? . . . It is inevitable . . . , as it has always been, that a drunken thirst should invite, that pride should puff me up, bad temper inflame me, greed disturb, cruelty thrill, ambition delight, and lust hurry me towards ruin, with allurements that will not let go.’

Thus, often, [I said] to myself. For I was involved in such a mass of errors from my earlier life, and they were holding me. I did not even myself believe that I could win free. So I got into the way of showing compliance to my clinging vices, and, in despair of better things, I would applaud my badness as, after all, my own, belonging to me.

Then came the water of regeneration,¹ and the stain of my past life was wiped away. A light from above, both bright and clear, shed itself upon my heart, now reconciled. Then, by the Spirit breathed from heaven, a second birth made me anew, a different man, and in a wonderful way : what in me had wavered, now stood firm ; what had been shut tight, now opened ; dark places shone ; ease was given to what had seemed difficult ; what I had deemed impossible, I could do.

—Cyprian, *To Donatus* 3, 4 (A.A.).

¹ Cyprian's baptism.

5. BASIL OF CAPPADOCIA, 357

Basil, son of a lawyer of Caesarea in Cappadocia, returned in 355 from studies in Constantinople and Athens. His younger brother Gregory describes the conversion which led to his baptism in 357, and his taking up the monastic life. His family was nominally Christian.

81 When the mother had arranged excellent marriages for the other sisters, such as was best in each case, Macrina's brother, the great Basil, returned after his long period of education, already a practised rhetorician. He was puffed up beyond measure with the pride of oratory, and looked down on the local dignitaries, excelling in his own estimation all the men of standing and position. Nevertheless Macrina took him in hand, and with such speed did she draw him also towards the mark of philosophy¹ that he forsook the glories of this world and despised fame gained by speaking, and deserted it for this busy life where one toils with one's hands.² His renunciation of property was complete, lest anything should impede the life of virtue.

—Gregory of Nyssa, *Life of St. Macrina*. P.G. 46 : 966 B-C (Lowther Clarke*).

¹ i.e. true religion.

² i.e. monastic life.

Basil's own account of his conversion does not mention his sister, but speaks of the experience of his own heart.

- 82 Much time had I spent in vanity, and had wasted nearly all my youth in the vain labour which I underwent in acquiring the wisdom made foolish by God [I Corinthians 1 : 20]. Then once upon a time, like a man roused from a deep sleep, I turned my eyes to the marvellous light of the truth of the Gospel, and I perceived the uselessness of 'the princes of this world that come to naught' [I Corinthians 2 : 6]. I wept many tears over my miserable life, and I prayed that guidance might be granted to me to admit me to the doctrines of true religion. First of all, I decided to mend my ways a bit, because they had been perverted for a long time by my intimacy with wicked men. Then I read the Gospel, and I saw there that a great means of reaching perfection was the selling of one's goods, the sharing of them with the poor,¹ the giving up of all care for this life, and the refusal to allow the soul to be turned by any sympathy to the things of earth. And I prayed that I might find someone of the brethren who had chosen this way of life, that with him I might cross life's short and troubled strait. And many did I find in Alexandria, and many in the rest of Egypt, and others in Palestine, and in Coele-Syria,² and in Mesopotamia.³ I admired their continence in living, and their endurance in toil; I was amazed at their persistence in prayer, and at their triumphing over sleep... I called these men's lives blessed, in that they did indeed show that 'they bear about in their body the dying of Jesus' [II Corinthians 4 : 10]. and I prayed that I, too, as far as it lay within my power, might imitate them.

—Basil, *Letters* 223 : 2 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

¹ A literal interpretation of Mathew 19 : 21.

² See 27 Note 1.

³ For monasticism in the Persian Empire, see Afrahat in 425.

6. VICTORINUS OF ROME, 362

Augustine speaks of his conversation with the aged Simplicianus, and how he had told the story of the conversion of Victorinus, a well-known Professor of Rhetoric.

- 83 He used to read the Holy Scriptures, and sought out and studied all the Christian writings most studiously. He

said to Simplicianus—not openly but secretly as a friend—‘You must know that I am a Christian.’ To which Simplicianus replied, ‘I shall not believe it, nor shall I count you among the Christians, until I see you in the Church of Christ.’ Victorinus then asked, with mild mockery, ‘Is it then the walls that make Christians . . . He was fearful of offending his friends . . .

But he steadily gained strength from reading and inquiry, and . . . suddenly and unexpectedly, he said to Simplicianus—as he himself told me—‘Let us go to the church; I wish to become a Christian.’ Simplicianus went with him, scarcely able to contain himself for joy. He was admitted to the first sacraments of instruction, and not long afterwards gave in his name that he might receive the baptism of regeneration. At this Rome marvelled and the Church rejoiced . . .

Finally, when the hour arrived for him to make a public profession of his faith—which at Rome those who are about to enter into Thy¹ grace make from a platform in the full sight of the faithful people, in a set form of words learned by heart—the presbyters offered Victorinus the chance to make his profession more privately . . . But Victorinus chose rather to profess his salvation in the presence of the holy congregation. For there was no salvation in the rhetoric which he taught: yet he had professed that openly. Why, then, should he shrink from naming Thy Word before the sheep of Thy flock, when he had not shrunk from uttering his own words before the mad multitude?

So, then, when he ascended the platform to make his profession, everyone, as they recognised him, whispered his name one to the other, in tones of jubilation. Who was there among them that did not know him? And a low murmur ran through the mouths of all the rejoicing multitude: ‘Victorinus! Victorinus!’ There was a sudden burst of exaltation at the sight of him, and suddenly they were hushed that they might hear him. He pronounced the true faith with an excellent boldness, and all desired to take him to their very heart.

—Augustine, *Confessions* 8: 4-5 (L.C.C.)

¹ Augustine is addressing God.

7. AUGUSTINE OF NORTH AFRICA, 386

Augustine, the son of a pagan father and a Christian mother, had intellectual difficulties about becoming a Christian, but his main trouble was moral.

Dislike of the Old Latin Translation of the Bible, 372

- 84 I resolved, therefore, to direct my mind to the Holy Scriptures, that I might see what they were . . . Then it was quite different from what I now feel . . . They appeared to me quite unworthy to be compared with the dignity of Tully.¹ For my inflated pride was repelled by their style,² nor could the sharpness of my wit penetrate their inner meaning. Truly they were of a sort to aid the growth of little ones, but I scorned to be a little one and, swollen with pride, I looked upon myself as fully grown.

—Augustine, *Confessions* 3 : 9 (L.C.C.).

¹ i.e. Cicero, the great Roman orator, and Latin stylist.

² The Vulgate translation was not begun by Jerome till 383. See 214.

The Limited Light of Platonism, 385

- 85 Thou (God) didst procure for me . . . certain books of the Platonists, translated from Greek into Latin. And in them I found, not indeed in the same words, but to the self-same effect, enforced by many and various reasons, that 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.' [John 1 : 1-3]. That which was made by him is 'life and the life was the light of men. And the light shined in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.' [John 1 : 4-5]. Furthermore, I read that the soul of man, though it 'bears witness to the light,' yet itself 'is not the light; but the Word of God, being God, is that true light that lights every man who comes into the world'. And further, that 'he was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not'. [John 1 : 7-10]. But that 'he came unto his own, and his own received him not. And as many as received him,

to them gave the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name' [John 1 : 12]—this I did not find there.

Similarly, I read there that God the Word was born 'not of flesh nor of blood, nor of the will of man, nor the will of the flesh, but of God'. But, that 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us'—I found this nowhere there. [John 1 : 13, 14] . . . That 'in due time, Christ died for the ungodly' [Romans 5 : 6] and that thou 'sparedst not thine only Son, but deliveredst him up for us all' [Romans 8 : 32]—this is not there.

—Augustine, *Confessions* 7 : 13-14 (L.C.C.*).

Conversion, 386

Augustine was living in immorality, and even after his intellectual difficulties had been solved, this had to be dealt with.

- 86 I flung myself down under a fig tree—how I know not—and gave free course to my tears . . . I sent up these sorrowful cries : 'How long, how long? Tomorrow and tomorrow? Why not now? Why not this very hour make an end to my uncleanness?'

I was saying these things and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl—I know not which—coming from the neighbouring house, chanting over and over again, 'Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it.' Immediately I ceased weeping and began most earnestly to think whether it was usual for children in some kind of game to sing such a song, but I could not remember ever having heard the like. So, damming the torrent of my tears, I got to my feet, for I could not but think that this was a Divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage I should light upon. For I had heard how Antony,¹ accidentally coming into church while the Gospel was being read, received the admonition as if what was read had been addressed to him : 'Go and sell what you have and give it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me' [Matthew 19 : 21]. By such an oracle he was forthwith converted to Thee.

¹ The founder of Egyptian monasticism (250-352).

So I quickly returned to the bench where Alypius² was sitting, for there I had put down the Apostle's book when I had left there. I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the first paragraph on which my eyes fell: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof' [Romans 13: 14]. I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused into my heart something like the light of full certainty, and all the doubt of gloom vanished away.

Closing the book, then, and putting my finger or something else for a mark I began—now with a tranquil countenance—to tell it all to Alypius... He asked to see what I had read. I showed him, and he looked on even further than I had read. I had not known what followed. But indeed it was this, 'Him that is weak in the faith, receive' [Romans 14: 1]. This he applied to himself, and told me so. By these words of warning he was strengthened, and... he joined me in full commitment without any restless hesitation.

Then we went into my mother,³ and told her what had happened, to her great joy. We explained to her how it had occurred—and she leaped for joy triumphant; and she blessed Thee.

—Augustine, *Confessions* 8: 28-30 (L.C.C.).

² Augustine's friend and pupil.

³ Monnica. See 67.

8. MAR ABA THE PERSIAN, c. 520

87 This holy and virtuous Father was originally from a village called Hali in the district of Radan¹; he was a Magian, and very attached to his beliefs; he was Secretary to the Marzban [Governor] of the district of Nabt, who lived at Radan. God willed to choose him, and providentially arranged that one day, when he was preparing to cross the Tigris in a boat to go to Hali and visit his home, a student [Christian catechist] called Yusuf came forward to cross with him.

¹ District lying between the rivers Diyala and Tigris, south of Bait-Garma.

Mar Aba turned him out, and made him leave the boat ; but when the boat reached midstream, the wind rose violently and stirred up the waves, forcing Mar Aba to return to the bank, and wait for a calm. Once the storm had died down, Yusuf repeated his request, but Mar Aba again rejected his petition, reprimanded him, and refused to allow him to go across with him. Hardly had he reached the middle of the Tigris, when lo and behold, the wind rose again, and forced him a second time to return to the shore. This time, when the wind had died down, the modesty and calmness of Yusuf, who had already boarded the boat, led Mar Aba to respect him and allow him to sit down. When they began the crossing, the wind fell completely. Mar Aba was astonished. He asked him what his religion was, and the student told him. Mar Aba was impressed. He questioned him about what his faith taught ; Yusuf instructed him, and convinced him that the Christian religion was true. From that time onwards Mar Aba gave himself to fasting, prayers, and enquiry. He even confessed the Christian faith before his superior officer, who had seen him going to church, and asked why. He gave up everything, and received Holy Baptism in a village called Ahad, at the hands of an old priest, known by the name of Bar-shahde . . .

He went after that to Nisibin, where he entered the [theological] school, and attached himself to Ma'na, who later became Bishop of Arzan. He completed the course in a short time, and became an interpreter [of the Scriptures]. Next he went to the Greek Empire,² where he met a man of Edessa called Thomas, who taught him Greek, in which he was expert. Mar Aba, who could already speak Persian and Syriac, learned Greek as well . . . They went to Alexandria where they [gave public lectures on] the books of Theodore [of Mopsuestia] the Interpreter. Mar Aba lectured in Syriac, and Thomas interpreted in Greek. The Jacobites,³ irritated that a large crowd was coming to hear their expositions, collected in large numbers and expelled them from Alexandria. They went away to Constantinople,⁴ where

² Edessa was at that time in the Byzantine Empire.

³ The Egyptians were mostly Monophysites. The name ' Jacobite ' is an anachronism.

⁴ Cosmas the India-Sailor, who calls him Patricius, met Mar Aba there between 525 and 533.

they [lectured publicly]. Their fame came to the ears of the Emperor Justinian, who ordered that they should be compelled to anathematise the blessed Fathers Diodore, Theodore and Nestorius;⁵ when they refused, he ordered them to be mutilated. But the Bishops did not execute this order; it was a mark of the way men respected them.

Shortly afterwards Mar Aba returned to Nisibin, where he set up a school, and set to work on the revision of the Syriac Scriptures. In 540 he was appointed Patriarch of the East. (See 399-406).

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard* 2 : 27 (French in P.O. 7 : 154-8. Y).

⁵ See 301. As the condemnation of Theodore was not till 553, this statement is doubtful.

The above account, written later than 828, is closely dependent on the much earlier *Life of Mar Aba*.

D. MISSIONARY PREACHING

The method of this section is to select a few contemporary points of contact, and show how they were used by Christian preachers—especially the Apologists—as starting-points for their message.

I. IDOLATRY

The attack on idolatry was two-sided: idols themselves were attacked as powerless, empty and useless, of no more value than the materials from which they were made; but the gods whom the idols were said to represent were identified with demons, the very demons whom Christian exorcists cast out. It can be summed up in the words of Paul.

- 88 What do I imply by this? that an idol is anything but an idol? or food offered to it anything more than food? No: but the sacrifices the heathen offer are offered... 'to demons and to that which is not God';¹ and I will not have you become partners with demons.

—*I Corinthians* 11 : 19-20 (N.E.B.)

¹ Deuteronomy 32 : 17.

Idols are Nothing

While the Apologists had arguments in such passages as Psalm 115: 2-8, Jeremiah 10: 1-10, and Isaiah 44: 9-20 and 46: 1-7, it is clear that they also used *The Letter of Jeremiah* in the Apocrypha.

- 89 In Babylon you will see gods made of silver and gold and wood, which are carried on men's shoulders and inspire fear in the heathen. So take care not to . . . let fear for these gods possess you . . . Their tongues are smoothed by the craftsmen, and they themselves are overlaid with gold and silver, but they are false and cannot speak. People take gold and make crowns for the heads of their gods, as they would for a girl who loves ornaments; and sometimes the priests secretly take gold and silver from their gods and spend it upon themselves, and even give some of it to the harlots in the brothel. They deck their gods out with garments like men—these gods of silver and gold and wood, which cannot save themselves from rust and erosion. When they have been dressed in purple robes, their faces are wiped because of the dust of the temple, which is thick upon them . . . Their eyes are full of the dust raised by the feet of those who enter . . . The priests make their temples secure with doors and locks and bars, in order that they may not be plundered by robbers . . . Worms from the earth¹ devour them and their robes . . . Bats, swallows, and birds light on their bodies and heads; and so do cats. From this you will know that they are not gods; so do not fear them.

—*The Letter of Jeremiah* 4, 5, 8-13, 17, 18, 20, 22-23 (R.S.V.).

¹ Possibly white ants.

Idols are described in this way by Justin Martyr, Tertullian and the *Epistle to Diognetus*; but the *Octavius* is particularly vivid.

- 90 A god of wood, a portion perhaps of a pile, or of an unlucky log, is hung up, cut, hewn, planed; and a god of brass or silver, often from an impure vessel, . . . is fused, beaten with hammers, and forged on anvils; and the god of stone is cut, sculptured, and polished by some abandoned man, and does not feel the injury done to him in its nativity any more than afterwards it feels the worship flowing from your

vation. . . . When, therefore, does the god begin its existence? Lo, it is melted, wrought, sculptured, . . . set up—and even yet it is not a god! Lo, it is adorned, consecrated, prayed to—then at last it is a god, when man has chosen it to be so, and has dedicated it!

How much more truly do dumb animals naturally judge about your gods! Mice, swallows and kites know that they have no feeling. They gnaw them, trample on them, sit on them; and unless you drive them off, they build their nests in the very mouth of your god. Spiders, indeed, weave their webs over his face, and suspend their threads from his very head. You wipe, clean, scrape, and you protect and fear the things you make, while not one of you considers that he ought to know God before he worships Him.

—Minucius Felix, *Octavius* 23 and 24 (*A.-N.C.L.**).

It is interesting to compare an early Chinese Christian account of the origins of idolatry, probably 7th Century.

- 91 The people being deceived took gold to make images, silver images of spirits, and bronze images, and clay images of spirits, and wooden images of spirits; and moreover they made all sorts of animals, making men like men, making horses like horses, making oxen like oxen, making asses like asses; but unable to move, and not speaking, and not eating; alas! with no flesh, and no skin, no organs, no bones.

—*The Book of Jesus the Messiah* (Moule, C.C.).

Idols are the Abode of Demons

The Middle Platonist, Apuleius (fl. 100 A.D.) said that there was one supreme God, but that the pagan gods were intermediaries who acted as His agents among men. He gave them the name 'demons'. The Christians agreed that the gods were demons, but insisted that these demons were not good, but evil.

- 92 We affirm indeed the existence of certain spiritual essences. Nor is their name unfamiliar. The philosophers acknowledge that there are demons. . . . The poets are all acquainted with demons too; even the ignorant common people make frequent use of them in cursing—in fact, they

call upon Satan, the demon-chief, in their execrations ! . . . We are taught, moreover, by our Sacred Books how from certain angels, who fell of their own free-will, there sprang a more wicked demon-brood . . . Their great occupation is the ruin of mankind.

They cause disease, and lead men astray from the true God into all kinds of lust. Your gods are themselves terrible examples of these lusts.

If demons do what your gods do, . . . will it not then be more reasonable to hold that these spirits make themselves gods, . . . than that the gods are the equals of angels and demons . . .

But thus far we have been dealing only in words : we now proceed to a proof of facts, in which we will show that under different names gods and demons have a real identity. Let a person be brought before your tribunals, who is plainly possessed by a demon. The wicked spirit, commanded to speak by a follower of Christ, will as readily make the truthful confession that he is a demon, as elsewhere he has falsely asserted that he is a god . . . Mock as you like, but get the demons, if you can, to join you in your mocking—let *them* deny that Christ is coming to judge ! . . . Why, all the authority and power we have over them comes from our naming the Name of Christ, and recalling to their memory the woes with which God threatens them at the hands of Christ as Judge, and which they expect one day to overtake them. Fearing Christ in God, and God in Christ, they become subject to the servants of God and Christ. So, at our touch and breathing, . . . they leave at our command the bodies they have entered—unwilling, distressed, and put to an open shame before your very eyes. You believe them when they lie ; give them the credit, then, when they speak the truth about themselves.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 22 and 23 (*A.-N.C.L.* *).

For Origen on heathen gods as ' gluttonous demons ' see 70.

A Plea to an Idolater to accept the Gospel

The following extract from a letter of Pope Boniface V (619-625) to King Edwin of Northumbria shows how both the above elements were combined with positive preaching of the Gospel.

93 The clemency of the Divine Majesty, who by His Word alone created and established the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, has ordained the laws by which they subsist ; and by the counsel of His co-eternal Word in the unity of the Holy Spirit, He has formed man after His own image and likeness from the dust of the earth . . . We affectionately urge Your Majesties [Edwin and his Christian wife] to renounce idol-worship, reject the cunning flatteries of fortune-tellers, and believe in God the Father Almighty, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Spirit. This Faith will free you from Satan's bondage, and through the sustaining power of the Holy and undivided Trinity you will inherit eternal life.

The profound guilt of those who perversely cling to pernicious and damnable superstition and idolatrous worship is clearly shown in the damnable pattern they adore. Of such the Psalmist says : ' All the gods of the heathen are devils ; it is the Lord who made the heavens ' [Psalm 96 : 5, Vulgate translation].

Boniface then quotes Psalm 115 : 4-6 in full.

How can such objects have power to help you, when they are made for you from perishable materials by the labour of your own subjects and servants ? Even their inanimate resemblance to human form is solely due to man's craftsmanship. Unless you move them they cannot move, but are like a stone fixed in its place : they are manufactured, but have no intelligence, being utterly insensible, and having no power to hurt or help. We cannot understand how people can be so deluded as to worship as gods objects to which they themselves have given a likeness to human form.

Accept the sign of the holy Cross, by which the entire human race has been redeemed, and exorcise from your heart the damnable crafts and devices of the Devil, who jealously opposes all the workings of God's goodness. Overthrow and destroy these material objects that you have made your gods, and the very destruction of these things . . . will itself afford you clear evidence of the worthlessness of these objects of your former worship. Consider, you yourselves are nobler than they, for God has given you life, and you owe nothing to their power . . . Therefore accept the knowledge of your Creator, who breathed into your frame

the breath of life, and who sent His only Son for your salvation, that He might deliver you from the evil power of the Devil, and grant you the prize of heaven.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 2 : 10 (L.S.-P.).

2. THE WORD

'The Word', 'The Word of God' was a term which gave a point of contact with both Jewish and Greek thought, and was very commonly used by the Apologists to designate Christ. It was only after the Arian controversy (see 234, 235) that it was felt more important to insist on Jesus' more common title of 'Son of God'. The term 'Word' had many facets of meaning:

1. To the Jews it meant God's creating and sustaining *power* (Genesis 1 : 3, compare John 1 : 3).

2. To the Greeks it suggested the *reason* at the centre of the universe, and the Hellenistic Jews identified this reason with the personified *Wisdom* of Proverbs 8 : 22-31 and Wisdom of Solomon 7 : 21-8 : 1.

3. To the Jews, it was linked with prophecy, and suggested God's *revelation* through a *Person* (Jeremiah 1 : 1-2, compare Hebrews 1 : 1-2).

4. To philosophers and thinkers it suggested an *intermediary* between the unknowable God and finite man; it could therefore be used to put across the idea of the *Incarnation* (John 1 : 14).

The Wisdom of God

Origen quotes or alludes to the following passage in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon nine times in his *Against Celsus*.

- 94 I learned both what is secret and what is manifest,
for wisdom, the fashioner of all things, taught me . . .
For wisdom is more mobile than any motion;
because of her pureness she pervades and penetrates all
things.
For she is a breath of the power of God,
and a pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
therefore nothing defiled gains entrance into her.
For she is a reflection of eternal light,
a spotless mirror of the working of God,
and an image of his goodness.

Though she is but one, she can do all things,
and while remaining in herself, she renews all things ;
in every generation she passes into holy souls
and make them friends of God, and prophets ;
for God loves nothing so much as the man who lives with
wisdom . . .

She reaches mightily from one end of the earth to another,
and she orders all things well.

—*Wisdom of Solomon* 7 : 21-22, 24-27 and 8 : 1 (R.S.V.).

It has to be noted that the canon of the Old Testament had not yet been fixed, and the Apologists used certain books of the Apocrypha quite freely as Scriptures.

Christ the Word of God

Justin Martyr refers to various passages in the Old Testament where God is said to have appeared to man. He is speaking to Trypho the Jew.

- 95 You must not imagine that the unbegotten God Himself came down or went up from any place. The ineffable Father and Lord of all does not come anywhere nor walk nor sleep nor rise up, but remains in His own place, wherever that is, quick to see and quick to hear, without eyes and without ears but with inexpressible power. He sees all things, and knows all things, and not one of us escaped His notice. He is not moved, nor is He confined to space and [even] to the whole world, for He existed before the world was made. How then could He talk with anyone, or be seen by anyone, or appear on the smallest part of the earth? . . . Neither Abraham nor Isaac nor Jacob nor any other human being saw the Father, . . . but they saw Him who was God according to the will of the Father, His Son, and His Angel¹ [because He served His purpose]. It pleased God that He should be born man through the Virgin . . .

[Christians] call Him the Word, because He carries tidings from the Father to men. But they maintain that His power is indivisible, and inseparable from the Father, just as . . . the light of the sun on earth is indivisible and inseparable

¹ Genesis 48 : 15-16. In Greek the word 'angel' means 'messenger'.

from the sun [itself] in the heavens. For instance, when the sun sinks, the light sinks along with it.

God produced a Beginning before all created things, a rational Power coming from Himself, who is called by the Holy Spirit the Glory of the Lord [Exodus 16:7], who sometimes calls Himself Son, and sometimes Angel, and sometimes God, and sometimes Lord and Word... All His names are derived from the fact that He serves the Father's purpose and that He was begotten from the Father by His will. We see a similar thing taking place in our own experience. When we utter any word, we originate this word but do not produce it by means of division, as if the reason [literally, 'word'] in us were thereby reduced. But the process is like what we see when one fire is kindled from another; the fire from which the kindling came is not reduced but remains the same.

Justin then quotes Proverbs 8: 21-36 in support of his argument.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, from 127, 128 and 61 (A.-N.C.L. and Hanson*).

A very similar argument is presented by Eusebius, who speaks of God's 'pre-existent Word' appearing to Abraham and others.

The Incarnation of the Word

Tertullian uses arguments similar to those of Justin above, but adjusts them to a pagan audience.

- 96 God devised the whole universe by Word, by Reason, by Power. Among your own philosophers, too, it is argued that *Logos*, that is, Word and Reason, would seem to be the Artificer of the universe. This Word Zeno¹ defines as the Maker who has formed and ordered all; he will have it that this Word is also called Fate and God, and Mind of Jupiter, and Universal Law. All this Cleanthes² gathers up into [the term] Spirit, and affirms it to pervade the universe. We too, to that Word, Reason and Power—by which we said God devised all things—would ascribe Spirit as its substance; and in Spirit, giving utterance, we should

¹ Greek Stoic philosopher.

² The Greek poet quoted by Paul in Acts 17: 28.

find Word ; with Spirit, ordering and disposing all things, Reason ; and over Spirit, achieving all things, Power. This, we have been taught, proceeds from God, begotten in this proceeding from God, and therefore called ' Son of God ' and ' God ' because of unity of nature. For God too is Spirit.

[He repeats Justin's metaphor of the sun and its rays]. This ray of God, as was ever foretold in time past, came down into a Virgin, and, fashioned into flesh in her womb, is born—man mingled with God. The flesh formed by the Spirit is nourished, grows to manhood, speaks, teaches, acts—and is Christ.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 21 (Glover—S.*).

The Sending of the Word

- 97 Truly God Himself, almighty, all-creating, and invisible, Himself from heaven has sent the Truth and the Word, holy and incomprehensible, and set Him firm in their hearts. He did not, as man might have done, send some attendant angel or ruler, or one of those who manage earth's affairs, or of those entrusted with the administration of heaven, but the Artificer Himself, the Creator of all things, by whom He made the heavens [and who sustains and rules the whole created universe]. Him sent He to them. Was it then, as human reckoning might have it, in despotism, and fear and terror ? No indeed, but in gentleness and meekness, as a King He sent His kingly Son. He sent Him as God, sent Him as Man to men. As saving He sent, as persuading and not to force. For force does not belong to God. As calling He sent, not pursuing. As loving He sent, not judging. For he shall send Him Judging, and who shall stand His coming ?

—*Epistle to Diognetus* 7 : 1-6 (A.A.*).

What we mean when we call Jesus the Word of God

- 98 We say that He was a sort of composite Being . . . Within the visible man He possessed something more Divine ; this was the part to which the title ' Son of God ' is properly applied, the Divine Word, the Power and Wisdom of God.

(1 : 66)

Not even we suppose that the body of Jesus, which could then be seen and perceived by the senses, was God . . . Not even His soul was God ; for He said of it : ' My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death ' [Matthew 26 : 38] . . . In our opinion, it was the Divine Word and Son of the God of the universe that spoke in Jesus, saying : ' I am the way, and the truth, and the life ' [John 14 : 6] . . . When we say this we do not separate the Son of God from Jesus. For after the incarnation the soul and body of Jesus became very closely united with the Word of God. (2 : 9)

Let our critics know that He, whom we think and have believed to be God and Son of God from the beginning, is the very Word and Wisdom and Truth itself. We affirm that His mortal body and human soul in Him received the greatest elevation not only by communion but by union and intermingling. (3 : 41)

We ought not to imagine that because of the feminine name Wisdom and Righteousness are feminine in their being. In our view the Son of God is these things . . . the Word which includes every word . . . We say that this Word dwelt in the soul of Jesus and was united with it in closer union than that of any other soul, because He alone has been able perfectly to receive the highest participation in Him who is the very Word and the very Wisdom, and the very Righteousness Himself. (5 : 39)

With Jesus human and Divine nature began to be woven together, so that by fellowship with Divinity human nature might become Divine, not only in Jesus, but all those who believe and go on to undertake the life which Jesus taught, the life which leads everyone who lives according to Jesus' commandment to friendship with God and fellowship with Jesus. (3 : 28)

By His Word God is always correcting those who listen to what He says. In each generation His Word descends into holy souls and makes them friends of God and prophets [Wisdom 7 : 27, see 94]. And by the advent of Christ He corrects through the Christian Gospel not the unwilling, but those who choose the higher life which is pleasing to God. (4 : 3)

—Origen, *Against Celsus*, sections as indicated above (C.*)

See also 1, 70, 79, 83, 85, 93, 100, 107, 128, 137, 225, 242, 255, 257, 269, 279, 281, 286, 289, 291-3, 298, 321, 326, 327, 329.

3. THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST

What was Christianity to do about the cultural heritage of its converts? The Greeks had made an outstanding contribution to philosophy—was all this to be abandoned? In a decadent age, when many looked back to 'the good old days', must Christians turn their backs on a rich past, and put in its place something new and untried?

Non-Christian Philosophy

Among the Apologists we find two views—that philosophy was a preparation for Christ; and that Christianity is totally new, and must reject philosophy as false.

- 99 We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above that He is the Word of whom every race of men are partakers; and those who lived with reason are Christians . . . —as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus,¹ and men like them; and among the Barbarians,² Abraham, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishaël, Elijah, and many others.

Whatever things were rightly said among all teachers, are the property of us Christians . . . For all the writers were able to see realities dimly through the sowing of the implanted Word that was in them. For the seed and imitation according to capacity is one thing; and quite another is the thing itself, of which there is the participation and imitation according to the grace which is from Him.

—Justin Martyr *I Apology* 46 and *II Apology* 13 (A.-N.C.L.-S.*).

¹ Greek philosopher c. 500 B.C.

² i.e. the non-Greeks.

- 100 Philosophy then before the coming of the Lord was necessary to the Greeks to bring them to righteousness, but now it is profitable to bring them to piety, seeing that it is a sort of training . . . 'Your foot shall not stumble' [Proverbs 3:23] if you ascribe good things to Providence, whether they be Greek or Christian. For God is the cause of all good things, but of some primarily, as of the Old and New Covenants, and of others consequentially, as of philosophy. Perhaps also it was given primarily to the Greeks in times

before the Lord called the Greeks ; for philosophy educated the Greek world as the Law did the Hebrews ' to bring them to Christ ' [Galatians 3 : 24].

—Clement of Alexandria, *Miscellanies* 1 : 5. 28. 1-3 (A.-N.C.L.-S.*).

For Origen's similar view in *Against Celsus* 4 : 3 see 98.

Tertullian stresses the other side of the question.

- 101** Philosophy is the material of the world's wisdom, the rash interpreter of the nature and the dispensation of God. Indeed, heresies are themselves instigated by philosophy.

He instances the Gnostics and Marcion.

What indeed has Athens [the home of Greek philosophy] to do with Jerusalem ? What has the Academy to do with the Church ? What have heretics to do with Christians ? . . . Away with all attempts to produce a Stoic, Platonic and dialectic Christianity ! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus.

—Tertullian, *Heretics have no Case* ! 7 (A.-N.C.L.-S.).

The Antiquity and Message of the Prophets

The Apologists stressed the antiquity of the Old Testament books, and their prophetic witness to the coming of Christ.

- 102** From the first, God sent messengers into the world, . . . men abundantly endowed with the Holy Spirit, that they might proclaim that there is one God only who made all things . . . The preachers of whom we have spoken are called prophets, from the office which belongs to them of predicting the future . . . Their words, as well as the miracles which they performed, . . . we have still in the literary treasures they have left, and which are open to all . . . Their high antiquity, first of all, claims authority for these writings. With you, too, it is a kind of religion to demand belief on this very ground. Well, all the substances, materials, origins, classes, contents of your most ancient writings, . . . nay, your very gods themselves, your very

temples and oracles and sacred rites, are less ancient than the work of a single prophet, in whom you have the treasury of the entire Jewish religion, and therefore of ours. If you happen to have heard of a certain Moses, I speak of him . . . He came 400 years before Danaus, your most ancient name. He antedates by 1000 years the death of Priam [King of Troy]. I might affirm, too, that he is 500 years earlier than Homer, and have supporters of that view.¹ The other prophets also, though of later date, are even the most recent of them as far back as the earliest of your philosophers, legislators and historians.

These statements, if questioned, could be proved by a thorough investigation of historical sources.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 18 and 19 (*A.-N.C.L.**).

¹ Homer is, of course, later than Priam, about whom he wrote. But though Tertullian's chronology is exaggerated and inconsistent, his general argument is valid. Compare the reference to men 'more ancient than those who are reputed to be philosophers' in the story of Justin Martyr's conversion (76).

The argument from prophecy was used with both pagans and Jews. Justin Martyr uses it thus to the Roman leaders.

- 103** We will now produce the proof, not taking it on trust from those who say so, but being inevitably persuaded by those who prophesied before it came to pass, since we see with our eyes things happened, and happening, just as they were foretold. This, we think, will seem to you also the best and truest evidence . . . In these Books of the Prophets we find announced as coming, One born of a Virgin ; and growing to manhood ; and healing every disease and sickness, and raising the dead ; and being hated, disowned, and crucified—Jesus our Christ ; and dying and rising again, and ascending into heaven, both being, and being called, Son of God ; and certain sent by Him to every race of men to preach these things, and its being men from the Gentiles rather, who believe in Him.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 30, and 31 (*A.A.*).

Here is an example of its use to a Jew.

- 104** For when Daniel speaks of 'one like unto the Son of Man' who received the everlasting kingdom [Daniel 7 : 13], does

he not hint at [the mystery of the Incarnation]? For in saying 'like unto the Son of Man', he declares that He appeared, and was Man, but not of human seed. And the same thing he proclaimed in mystery when he speaks of the stone which 'was cut out without hands' [Daniel 2 : 34]. For the expression 'it was cut out without hands' meant that it is not a work of man, but of the will of the Father and God of all things, Who brought Him forth. And when Isaiah says 'Who shall declare his generation?' [Isaiah 53 : 8], he meant that His descent could not be declared. Now no one who is a son of man has a descent which cannot be declared. And when Moses¹ says that He will 'wash his garments in the blood of the grape' [Genesis 49 : 11], does this not mean, in an obscure prediction, what I have now often told you—namely, that He had blood, but not from men, just as God, not man, has begotten the blood of the vine? And when Isaiah calls Him the 'Angel of mighty counsel' [Isaiah 9 : 6], did he not foretell Him to be the teacher of those truths which He did teach when He came? For He alone taught openly those mighty counsels which the Father designed both for those who have been and shall be well-pleasing to Him, and also for those who have rebelled against His will.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 76 (A.-N.C.L.*).

¹ As the author of the Book of Genesis.

For other examples of interpretation of prophecy, see I, 6, 95, 107, 108.

4. THE SEEKING OF THE HUMAN HEART

Missionary preaching also looked for a point of contact in the deep-seated conviction of the human heart that there is a God, and its sense of need. It led on from this to the fact that God has revealed His love to man in Jesus Christ.

Natural and Revealed Religion

105 Would you have us prove Him to you from His own works, in their multitude and character, those works that contain us, that sustain us, that delight us—yes! that afright us? Would you have us prove Him to you from the witness of

the human soul itself? Yes! the soul, be it cabined and cribbed by the body, be it confined by evil nurture, be it robbed of its strength by lusts and desires, be it enslaved by false gods—none the less, when it recovers its senses, as after surfeit, as after sleep, as after some illness... the soul names God, and for this reason and no other, because, if language be used aright, He is the one true God. 'Good God!', 'Great God!', 'Which may God give!' is the utterance of all men. That He is also judge is shown by such utterances as 'God sees', 'I leave it to God', 'God will repay me'. O the witness of the soul by nature Christian! And then, as it says these words, it turns its gaze not to the Capitol [the temples of Rome] but to heaven, for it knows the abode of the living God; from Him and from heaven it came.

But, that we might attain to an ampler and more authoritative knowledge both of Himself, and of His counsels and will, God has added a written revelation for the sake of everyone whose heart is set on seeking Him, that seeking he may find, and finding believe, and believing obey.

Tertullian then goes on to the argument from prophecy, as quoted above in 102.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 17 and 18 (Glover—S. and A.-N.C.L.*).

The Longing for Certainty

The following statement by a thoughtful pagan provided Paulinus in 625 with a missionary opportunity. Unfortunately there is no record of what he said in reply, but it led to conversion.

106 So seems to me, O King,¹ the life of man here on earth, compared with the parts of time beyond our knowledge. When you are seated at dinner with your thanes and ministers in winter time, the hearth fire in the midst, the dining-room made warm, but outside raging blasts of winter rain and snow, there comes a sparrow, flitting swiftly through, in at one window, then out at another. For a short moment within, it is safe from the winter's wind, but how short its peace, gone in a moment, from winter to winter back again, out of your sight. So is the life of man. It appears for a space. What comes after, what went before,

¹ Addressed to King Edwin of Northumbria.

who rightly knows? If this new teaching brings anything more sure, it seems worth following.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 2 : 13 (T.C.A.).

5. THE CHANGED LIFE

The changed lives of the Christians were often conspicuous in a society that was rotten and decadent, and provided a starting-point for Christian preaching.

107 We will further say on this subject to people with an open mind . . . that according to the promise of Jesus the disciples have done even greater works than the physical miracles which Jesus did [John 14 : 12]. For the eyes of people blind in soul are always being opened, and the ears of those who were deaf to any talk of virtue eagerly hear about God and the blessed life with Him ; and many too who were lame in the feet of their inner man, but have now been healed by the Word, do not just leap, but ' leap as an hart ' [Isaiah 35 : 6], an animal hostile to serpents and superior to all the poison of vipers. In fact, these lame people who have been healed receive from Jesus power to walk on their feet, where before they were lame, over all the serpents and scorpions of evil, and in general over all the power of the enemy [Luke 10 : 19], and in their walk they do nothing wrong ; for they have even become superior to all evil and the poison of demons.

It would not be remarkable if only some of the most intelligent people were converted. But there are also some of the most irrational people and those most subject to their passions, who on account of their lack of reason are changed to a more self-controlled life with more difficulty. However, as Christ was the Power of God and the Wisdom of the Father [I Corinthians 1 : 27], on this account He accomplished this, and is still doing so, even if neither Jews nor Greeks are willing to accept Him because they disbelieve His word . . . Instead of being cowardly, mean, and unmanly, men become brave and bold ; and they show this particularly in their struggles for piety towards the God who created all things.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 2 : 48 and 79 (C.*).

See further 14, 77, 111, 177, 179, 181, 412, 414 and contrast 418-423.

6. CONTROVERSY

A final point of contact lay in the various misunderstandings of the faith and practices of the Christians; accusations that they were unfaithful to the Roman Empire and immoral in their religious rites; arguments of various sorts against the Christian Faith. In general, the Apologists replied by stating positively what Christians believed and how they worshipped. See 348-349. The best examples of answers to specific objections are in Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho*, and Origen's *Against Celsus*.

Using Scripture with reference to Context

108 *Trypho*—I have been shaken by so many quotations from Scripture, that I do not know what to say about the Scripture which Isaiah writes, in which God says that He does not give His glory to another: 'I am the Lord God; this is my name; my glory will I not give to another, nor my virtues' [Isaiah 42:8].

Justin—If you spoke these words, Trypho, and omitted—in your simplicity and with no ill intent—what goes before and comes after—you must be forgiven. But if it was because you imagined you could throw doubt on the passage, in order that I might admit that the Scriptures contradicted each other, you have erred. But I shall not venture to suppose or to admit such a thing. If a Scripture which appears to be of such a kind is brought forward, . . . since I am utterly convinced that no Scripture contradicts another, I should prefer to admit that I do not understand what is recorded, and try to persuade those who imagine that the Scriptures are contradictory, to be of the same opinion as myself . . . But [in this case] I shall remind you of what the [whole] passage says, in order that you may recognise, even from this very [verse], that God gives glory to His Christ alone . . . For I will not repeat those of another passage, but those which are joined together in one.

He then repeats Isaiah 42:1-13, showing that the verse Trypho had quoted follows closely after the verse 'I the Lord have called thee in righteousness . . . for a light of the Gentiles.'

Have you perceived, my friends, that God says He will give Him whom He has established as a light of the Gentiles,

glory, and to no other ; and not, as Trypho said, that God was retaining the glory to Himself ?

Trypho—We have perceived this also. Pass on therefore to the rest of what you have to say.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 65 (A.-N.C.L.*)

It is to be noted that Justin usually quotes long passages from Scripture, rather than isolated verses.

Right and Wrong Methods of Using Scripture

Use of Context

- 109 *Celsus*—Why then does He utter loud laments and wailings, and pray that He may avoid the fear of death, saying something like this, ‘O Father, if this cup could pass by me?’

Origen—He attacks the words of the Gospel by exaggerating, and quoting the text incorrectly. No statement is found that Jesus ‘uttered wailings’. And he altered the original text ‘Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me’ [Matthew 26 : 39] ; and he does not quote the saying which at once shows Jesus’ piety towards His Father and His greatness of soul ; this is recorded after the previous saying, and reads as follows : ‘Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt.’ He pretends also not to have read of the willing obedience of Jesus to the will of His Father concerning the sufferings to which He was condemned, which is made clear by the words : ‘If this cannot pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done’ [Matthew 26 : 42].

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 2 : 24 (C.).

Accepting Parts of the Gospel for the sake of Argument

- 110 If Celsus believes the Gospels in places which, he thinks, will provide an opportunity of attacking Jesus and the Christians, but disbelieves them when they prove the Divinity in Jesus, we will say to him : ‘My good man, either disbelieve the Gospels entirely and do not think of using them as affording ground for accusation, or believe them all, and admire the incarnate Word of God.’

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 2 : 33 (C.*).

Studying the Scriptures Sincerely

III We invite the reader of this defence we have written in reply to Celsus' criticism, to have the patience and give his attention to our books, and to exert all his powers to find out from the writings the purpose of the authors, and their honesty and sincerity. For he will find men who contend ardently for what they have received, and that some of them show that they are writing about history of which they were eye-witnesses, and which they understood to be miraculous and worthy of being recorded for the benefit of future hearers . . . I challenge anyone to produce a comparable method which both converts and improves not merely one or two but a very large number of people, so that by comparing both the methods one may understand which doctrine disposes men towards goodness.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 4 : 53 (C.).

The Crucifixion and the Resurrection of Christ

II2 *Celsus*—What led you to believe, except that He foretold that after His death He would rise again? Come now, let us believe your view that He actually said this. How many others produce wonders like this to convince simple hearers whom they exploit by deceit!

He gives examples of gods and others in Greek myths.

Do you think that the stories of these others really are the legends which they appear to be, and yet that the ending of your tragedy is to be regarded as noble and convincing—His cry from the cross when He expired, and the earthquake and the darkness? While He was alive He did not help Himself, but after death He rose again and showed the marks of His punishment and how His hands had been pierced. But who saw this? A hysterical female, as you say, and perhaps some other one . . . who either . . . through wishful thinking had a hallucination due to some mistaken notion—an experience which has happened to thousands—or, which is more likely, wanted to impress the others by telling this fantastic tale . . . If Jesus really wanted to show forth Divine power, He ought to have appeared to the very men who treated Him spitefully and to the men who condemned Him, and to everyone everywhere.

Origen [Some points from a long and detailed reply].

The history of Jesus' resurrection from the dead cannot be compared with such tales.

His death on the cross was a public event, that no one may be able to say that He deliberately retired out of the sight of men, and that although He appeared to die He did not really do so, but, when He wanted to, again appeared and told the portentous tale that He had risen from the dead. But I think that the clear and certain proof is the argument from the behaviour of the disciples, who devoted themselves to a teaching which involved risking their lives. If they had invented the story that Jesus had risen from the dead, they would not have taught this with such spirit, in addition to the fact that in accordance with this they not only prepared others to despise death but above all despised it themselves.

You say Jesus appeared to a hysterical woman, but 'what about Thomas, who definitely did not believe till he saw Him ?

It is true that according to the Gospel He seems to us not to have appeared after the resurrection in the same way that He appeared before it when He was in public and before everyone ; [He appeared] not to all men but only to those whom He perceived to have obtained eyes which had the capacity to see His resurrection . . . It would not have been right for Him to have appeared to the man who had condemned Him and to those who had treated Him spitefully. For Jesus had consideration [for them], lest they should be smitten with blindness as the men of Sodom were [Genesis 19 : 11].

When He was sent into the world He did not merely make Himself known ; He also concealed Himself. For His whole nature was not known even to the people who knew Him, but some part of Him escaped them ; and to some He was entirely unknown. But He opened the gates of light to them that were in darkness and were sons of night, and to those who devoted themselves to becoming sons of the day and of the light. And our Lord and Saviour came as a good physician among men laden with sins, rather than to the righteous.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 2 : selections from 54-68 (C.).

7. MISSIONARY PREACHING IN THE EAST

Very little is known about the content of Missionary Preaching East of the Roman Empire in the first few centuries. The account of Shahlufa's evangelism (59) refers briefly to his message. Afrahat's Creed (241) shows the central points that were stressed in the Faith, and his discussion on Persecution (391) is an interesting sidelight on controversy with Jews.

The Approach to Fire-Worshippers

The stories of the Persian Martyrs contain religious discussions between Zoroastrians and Christians, which have been briefly summarised as follows.

113 *Christian*—You who are living beings, you worship created things which have no life !

Magian—But the sun is alive—it is the sun which gives life to all things ! Fire is alive, because it can burn up everything in existence !

Christian—No, fire is not alive, because a little shower is enough to put it out. The sun is not alive, because it yields place to the night. We Christians do not worship created things. We worship God, Who has made the sun and the fire, 'the earth and the seas and all that in them is'.¹

Magian—But you worship a dead Man, who died on a cross. You say that the One who was crucified is God !

Christian—[The Christian then presents the mystery of the Incarnation and Redemption.]

—Assemani, *Acts of the Holy Martyrs of the East*, 1, pp. 35 ff. (French summary in Labourt, *C.E.P.*, p. 41 Y.).

¹ Quoted from the Creed of Afrahat.

The above may be compared with a late Sixth Century account of the martyrdom of Eustace, a Georgian convert, who was put to death in 545 by the Persian Governor (Marzban) of Georgia under Khusrau I, because he had been a Magian, and had become a Christian. After giving a detailed account of how a Christian Archdeacon Samuel had proved to him that Christianity was better than Judaism, he sums up the reasons why he could no longer find satisfaction in the faith of his fathers :

114 When I had listened and learnt everything from Archdeacon Samuel—all things from the beginning until now—and examined every feature of the creeds of the Jews and of the Christians, I believed in God Eternal and His Son Jesus Christ. I have been baptised into this Faith, and nobody shall tear me away from Christ until my soul departs to heaven above. But about the Faith of my fathers I am afraid and ashamed to speak. For it was God who created heaven and earth, sun and moon and stars, the sea and the land, the rivers and assemblies of the waters, mountains and hills, meadows and forests, wood and fire, four-footed animals and beasts, reptiles and birds of the sky;¹ and afterwards, God created mankind and made him lord over all these and subjected all these to man. Are we now to abandon the God who created all this, and consider as gods things which have been created by God? Let this never be! The sun and moon and stars are not God; it was God who commanded the sun to lighten the day and ordered the moon and the stars to brighten the night, but they are not God. After all, God gives His commands to the clouds and they spread out and cover up the brilliance of the sun and moon. Therefore the sun and moon are not gods. Again, fire is no god, because man lights fire and man also puts it out, for man is lord of fire; therefore fire is not God. If it breaks out somewhere and spreads, it consumes whatever it encounters, either wood, meadow, or homestead; if a man is at hand, it burns him up too. But if water comes into contact with it, then it extinguishes the power of even such a flame as this, and the fire is reduced to nothing, because it is no god. Are we then to honour it as a divinity?

Rather it was God who gave us fire for our use, to melt ice and prepare all our food. When we require it, we light it, and when we so desire, we put it out. So that fire is not a God.

—*The Passion of Eustace the Cobbler* (Lang *).

¹ See 400 for the Magian objection to the creation of reptiles and snakes by a good God.

Is God our Creator, and is He Good?

But the most detailed and interesting discussion is that recounted in Bardaisan's *Dialogue on Fate*, written in Edessa about 196.

115 *The Objector*—If God is One, as you say, and if He is the Creator of men, and if it is His will that you should do what you are commanded, why did He not create men that they should not be able to do wrong, but should constantly be doing what is right, for in this way His will would have been accomplished ?

Bardaisan—If man had been made so, he would not have belonged to himself, but would have simply been the instrument of Him that moved him . . . But God in His kindness chose to make man differently. By freedom He exalted him above many creatures.

For instance, sun and moon must do as it is decreed for them ; with man it is different.

It has also been given to him to be guided by his own will, so that, whatever he is able to do, if he will he may do it, and if he will not he may not do it.

The Objector—What you have said is very good. But lo ! the commands which men have been given are very severe, and they cannot perform them.

Bardaisan—Men have not been commanded to do anything except what they are able to do. For the commandments set before us are two—[that] we refrain from everything which is wrong, and which we would not like to have done to ourselves ; and [that] we should do what is right, and what we love and are pleased to have done to ourselves in the same way. What man is too weak to avoid stealing, lying, acts of profligacy, hatred and deception ? . . . And as he is able to avoid doing these things, so is he able to love, and to bless, and to speak the truth, and to pray for what is good for everyone whom he knows.

He can do this no matter if he is sick or well.

The Objector—It is not easier to do wrong than right ?

Bardaisan—This is not true.

The Objector—Is it not man's nature to do wrong ?

Bardaisan—This is not so.

The Objector—There are others who say that men are governed by the decree of Fate, [so as to act] at one time wickedly, and at another time well.

Bardaisan—If Fate, or the Stars, are responsible, why do different countries have different customs? Men born in them are born under the same stars as us. And if Fate rules by regions, why do Jews and Christians living in these countries not live the same kinds of lives as the pagans? (For Bardaisan's details as to the changed lives of the Christians in various Eastern countries, see 14.)

Wherever they are, and in whatever place they are, the laws of the several countries do not prevent the Christians from obeying the law of their Christ; nor does the Fate of the [Heavenly] Governors compel them to make use of the things which they regard as impure.

It is true that other things—sickness and health, riches and poverty—are often beyond our control.

For, if we were able to do everything, we should ourselves be everything; and if we had not the power to do anything, we should be the tools of others. But when God wills them, all things are possible without hindrance, for there is nothing that can hold back that great and holy Will.

Things may seem imperfect now; but the day is coming when God shall make all things new [Revelation 21:5].

All evil commotions shall cease, and all rebellions terminate, and the foolish shall be convinced, and there shall be quietness and peace, through the gift of the Lord of all existing beings.

—Bardaisan, *Dialogue on Fate* (A.-N.C.L., *).

ENTRY THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Endurers were normally tested and prepared before they were admitted into the Church through baptism. See 70.

The Instructions of the Didache, c. 100

116 About baptism, baptise in this way: After first repeating all these things [see 75], baptise in running water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If you have no running water, baptise in other water, and if you cannot use cold water, use warm. If you have neither, pour water on the head three times, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And you must order the one who is to be baptised to fast one or two days beforehand, and any others who can do so fast. —Didache 7:1-4 (Goodspeed, A.P.)

III. THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Justin Martyr on Baptism, c. 150

117 As many as are persuaded and believe that the things are true which are taught by us and said to be true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to enter God with fasting, for the remission of their past sins, and we pray and fast with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are born again in the same manner in which we were ourselves born again. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the Universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water.

God is called Father and Lord of the Universe, because no one can give Him a proper name.

And this washing is called Illumination, because those who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under

A. ENTRY THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

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- 116 About baptism, baptise in this way : After first repeating all these things [see 72], baptise in running¹ water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. If you have no running water, baptise in other water, and if you cannot use cold water, use warm. If you have neither, pour water on the head three times, in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit. And before the baptism let the baptiser and the one who is to be baptised and any others who can do so fast. And you must order the one who is to be baptised to fast one or two days beforehand.

—*Didache* 7:1-4 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

¹ Greek 'living'.

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God is called Father and Lord of the Universe, because no one can give Him a proper name.

And this washing is called Illumination, because those who learn these things are illuminated in their understandings. And in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under

Pontius Pilate, and in the name of the Holy Spirit, who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed . . .

After we have thus washed him, we . . . bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer earnest prayers in common for ourselves and for the newly enlightened person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our deeds also to be found good citizens and keepers of the Commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. At the end of the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss.

Then follows the new convert's First Communion. See 133.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 61 and 65 (A.-N.C.L.—S.*).

Traditional Baptismal Rites, c. 200

In the following passage, Tertullian is pointing to certain traditional rites not specifically commanded in the Bible, which are valid because established by custom.

118 When we are about to enter the water, just a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the presiding minister, we solemnly declare that we disown the Devil, and his pomp, and his angels. After this we are immersed three times, making a rather fuller pledge than the Lord has appointed in the Gospels. Then, when we are taken up [out of the water], we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day on for a whole week we abstain from our daily bath.

—Tertullian, *On the Soldier's Crown*, 3 (A.-N.C.L.*).

Form of Baptismal Service in Rome, c. 200

119 At the hour set for the baptism, the bishop shall give thanks over oil and put it into a vessel: this is called the 'oil of thanksgiving'. And he shall take another oil and exorcise it: this is called the 'oil of exorcism'. A deacon shall bring the oil of exorcism, and shall stand at the presbyter's left hand; and another deacon shall take the oil of

thanksgiving, and shall stand at the presbyter's right hand. Then the presbyter, taking hold of each of those who are about to be baptised, shall command him to renounce, saying :

'I renounce thee, Satan, and all thy servants and all thy works.'

And when he has renounced all these, the presbyter shall anoint him with the oil of exorcism, saying :

'Let all spirits depart far from thee.'

Then, after these things, let him give him over to the presbyter who baptises, and let the candidates stand in the water¹ naked,² a deacon going with them likewise. And when he who is being baptised goes down into the water, he who baptises him, putting his hand on him, shall say thus :

'Dost thou believe in God, the Father Almighty ?'

And he who is being baptised shall say : 'I believe'.

Then, holding his hand placed on his head, he shall baptise [immerse] him once, and then he shall say :

'Dost thou believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary, and was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and was dead and buried, and rose again the third day, alive from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat at the right hand of the Father, and will come to judge the quick and the dead ?'

And when he says 'I believe', he is baptised again. And again he shall say :

'Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit ; in the Holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh ?'

He who is being baptised shall say accordingly 'I believe', and so he is baptised the third time.

And afterwards, when he has come up [out of the water], he is anointed by the presbyter with the oil of thanksgiving, the presbyter saying :

'I anoint thee with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ.'

¹ An earlier instruction recommends running water.

² In the Roman world this was not considered disgraceful in any way for men. According to the *Acts of Thomas*, women wore special 'girdles' at baptism.

And so each one, after drying himself, is immediately clothed,³ and then is brought into the Church. Then the bishop,⁴ laying his hand upon them, shall pray, saying :

' O Lord God, who hast made them worthy to obtain remission of sins through the laver of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, send into them Thy grace, that they may serve Thee according to Thy will; for Thine is the glory, to the Father and the Son, with the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church, both now and world without end. Amen.'

Then, pouring the oil of thanksgiving from his hand and putting it on his forehead, he shall say :

' I anoint thee with holy oil in the Lord, the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.'

And signing them⁵ on the forehead, he shall say : ' The Lord be with thee ', and he who is signed shall say : ' And with thy spirit '. And so shall he do to each one.

—Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 21 and 22 (Easton—S.*).

³ With new, white robes, as in Colossians 3 : 12, Revelation 7 : 14.

⁴ It appears that in the service one bishop, two presbyters, and two deacons took part.

⁵ with the Cross.

Who may Baptise ?

120 The bishop¹ has of course the right to confer it ; then the presbyters and deacons, not, however, without the bishop's authority . . . But besides, even laymen have the right to baptise ; for that which is received alike by all, can be by all alike conferred—unless you argue that the name ' disciples ' [Matthew 28 : 19] belongs only to bishops and presbyters and deacons.

But this privilege of laymen should only be used in cases of necessity. Women should never be allowed to baptise.

—Tertullian, *On Baptism* 17 (Souter —S.).

¹ Compare the views of Ignatius in 197.

The Correct Age for Baptism

The following passage is the first to refer by name to Infant Baptism. Tertullian objects to it because of a fear of the consequences of post-baptismal sin. Such a fear was to lead Constantine the Great to postpone baptism till he was on his deathbed.

- 121** In view of the circumstances and will, even the age of each person, a postponement of baptism is most advantageous, particularly, however, in the case of children. For what need is there, if it is not so urgent, that the sponsors also should be brought into danger, being . . . capable of falling short of their promises, and being deceived by the development of an evil disposition [in the child baptised]? The Lord indeed says 'Forbid them not to come unto Me' [Matthew 19 : 14]. Let them come, then, while they are growing up; let them come while they are learning, while they are being taught whither to come; let them become Christians, when they have been able to know Christ. Why hurries the age of innocence to the remission of sins? Shall we act more cautiously in worldly matters [than in spiritual]? Shall one to whom earthly substance is not entrusted, be entrusted with heavenly? Let them know how to seek salvation, that you may be seen to 'give to him that asketh' [Matthew 5 : 42].

For no less reason the baptism of the unmarried also should be postponed . . . until they either marry or are hardened for the practice of continence. If any should understand the importance of baptism, they will be more afraid of its consequences than of its postponement; unimpaired faith is sure of salvation.

—Tertullian, *On Baptism* 18 (Souter—S.).

Hippolytus, writing about the same time, mentions the baptism of little children at Rome :

- 122** First baptise the little ones; if they can speak for themselves, they shall do so; if not, their parents or other relatives shall speak for them. Then baptise the men, and last of all the women.

—Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 21 : 3-4 (Easton).

Is Heretical Baptism Valid ?

- 123 The Sacrament is not to be re-administered . . . When baptism is administered in the words of the Gospel, however great be the perverseness of either minister or recipient, the sacrament itself is holy on His account whose sacrament it is. In the case of one who receives baptism from a misguided man, if he receive not the perverseness of the minister but the holiness of the mystery, being united to the Church in good faith and hope and charity, he receives the remission of his sins . . . But if the recipient be himself misguided, then that which is administered does not avail for his salvation while he remains in his error ; on the other hand, that which he receives remains holy in the recipient, and is not renewed to him if he be brought into the right way.

—Augustine, *On Baptism* 4 : 16 and 18 (B.).

The above view was accepted in the Western Church. The Greek Church normally rebaptised heretics. The practice in Eastern Churches varied, as the following criticism by a Jacobite bishop of the practice of the Armenian Church shows :

- 124 They have a very bad, nay even diabolical, habit : they rebaptise any [Christian] who leaves his creed and follows theirs. The early Fathers did not teach us to re-baptise all those who are converted from any heresy, with the exception of those that are converted from the heresy of Arius, Sabellius, Macedonius and Paul of Samosata. [Some other heretics are to be re-confirmed but not re-baptised]. They have not permitted us either to rebaptise or to confirm those who come to us from the heresy of the Nestorians or that of the Chalcedonians . . . If these abjure the doctrine from which they have been converted and give us a written document that they will follow our doctrine, they are immediately received through the prayer of a Bishop ; and after two years they partake of our Sacrament.

—Dionysius Barsalibi, *Against the Armenians* 7 (Mingana, *W.S.* 4).

B. PUBLIC WORSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP

This section deals with the regular weekly worship ; it corresponds to our ' public worship ', but it must be understood that in time of persecution it often had to be held secretly.

I. DAY, TIME AND PLACE

The Day—Sunday

- 125** We hold our common assembly on the Day of the Sun, because it is the first day, on which God put to flight darkness and chaos,¹ and made the world, and on the same day Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead, . . . and . . . appeared to His Apostles and disciples.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 67 (B.).

¹ Literally ' matter '.

- 126** The Apostles appointed, That on the first day of the week there should be service and reading of the Holy Scriptures, and an Oblation [Eucharist] ; because on the first day of the week our Lord rose from the place of the dead, and on the first day of the week He manifested himself in the world.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 2 (Cureton A.S.D.).

The above passages, dated about 150 and 250 respectively, show that in the Roman Empire, and in Edessa, Sunday was the regular day of worship. Bardaisan's reference (see 14), makes it clear that Sunday was also observed in Parthia and the East. For other early references to Sunday, see 140, 156, 160.

The Time—Before Daybreak

- 127** We take also, in meetings before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presiding ministers, the sacrament of the Eucharist.

—Tertullian, *On the Soldier's Crown* 3 (A.-N.C.L.*).

Compare also Pliny's account in 346. It is clear that in some places the Christian Fellowship was also expressed by a Love-Feast on Sunday after sunset. See 152. Only after Constantine's decree of 321 (see 363) did Sunday become a day of rest for working people, and services could be held during the day.

The Place—A House-Church

The early Christians did not at first have church buildings. They broke bread in their homes (Acts 2:46), and there are frequent references to 'the church in your house' (Philemon 3, and many other references). The hospitality mentioned in II John 10 probably includes use of the house for services. The earliest church buildings mentioned were in the East—in Edessa (see 9), and Arbil (see 12). Churches were erected in the Roman Empire only in the late Third Century (see 418).

The following account by Irenaeus, quoted by Eusebius, probably refers to a service in a house-church in his boyhood.

- 128 I remember things then better than recent happenings, because lessons from boyhood grow with one's mind and become a part of it. And so I can tell the very place where the blessed Polycarp,¹ sitting down², used to discourse; his comings out and his goings in³; the impression of his life, and the appearance of his form; the discourses which he used to make for the congregation. He used to tell about his intercourse with John, and with the others who had seen the Lord. He would recall their sayings, this and that which he had heard from them about the Lord, about His mighty acts and His teaching. And because Polycarp had received it from eyewitnesses of the Word of Life, he used to tell it all in harmony with the Scriptures. Even then, since the mercy of God was upon me, I used to listen to these things eagerly, noting them for remembrance, not on paper, but in my very heart. And ever since by God's grace I literally go ruminating upon them.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5:20 (Foster).

¹ Bishop of Smyrna. See 350.

² The practice in the synagogue was to sit down to preach. Compare Luke 4:20, and Matthew 5:1.

³ This is not a quotation from Psalm 121:8—the routine of his life is covered by the next phrase. This is his *coming forth* (possibly from a side room of the house) and afterwards withdrawing there after the service.

2. THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR EUCHARIST

The Teaching of the Didache, c. 100

- 129 On the Lord's own day,¹ gather together and break bread and give thanks, after confessing your transgressions, so that your sacrifice may be pure. Let not one who has a quarrel with his comrade meet with you until they are reconciled, so that your sacrifice may not be defiled.²

—*Didache* 14 : 1-2 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

¹ Literally 'The Lord's day of the Lord', i.e. Sunday.

² Compare Matthew 5 : 23-24. The word 'sacrifice' certainly includes the ideas of the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God, and of the offering of the bread and wine to Him for His blessing. But see also Cyprian's views in 139.

- 130 And concerning the Eucharist ['Thanksgiving'], give thanks in this manner. First, concerning the cup: 'We thank Thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David, Thy son, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy Son. Glory be to Thee for ever.'

And concerning the broken bread: 'We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy Son. Glory be to Thee for ever. As this bread that is broken was scattered upon the mountains, and gathered together, and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom: for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.' And let none eat or drink of your Eucharist, but they that have been baptised into the name of the Lord . . .

And after you are filled, give thanks thus: 'We thank Thee, Holy Father, for Thy holy name, which Thou hast made to dwell in our hearts, and for the knowledge, faith and immortality, which Thou didst make known to us through Jesus, Thy Son. Glory be to Thee for ever. Thou, Almighty Lord, didst create all things for Thy name's sake, and gavest meat and drink for men to enjoy, and to us didst grant spiritual meat and drink and life eternal. Above all we thank Thee because Thou art mighty. Glory be to Thee for ever. Remember, Lord, Thy Church, to deliver her from all evil, and to perfect her in Thy love, and gather

together from the four winds her that is sanctified into Thy kingdom which Thou didst prepare for her. For Thine is the power and the glory for ever. Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God of David. If any is holy, let him come ; if any is unholy, let him repent. *Maranatha. Amen.*'

But allow the prophets to give thanks as much as they like.

—*Didache* 9 : 1-5 and 10 : 1-7 (Bigg—S.*).

Christians in Bithynia 112

For the account of the pagan Pliny, see 346.

Two Remarks of Ignatius on the Eucharist, c. 115

- 31 The Thanksgiving [Eucharist] is the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His kindness raised up.

—Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans* 7:1 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

- 132 Obey the bishop and the elders with an undisturbed mind, breaking one bread, which is the medicine of immortality, the antidote against death, to make us live forever in Christ Jesus.

—Ignatius, *Ephesians* 20 : 2 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

Justin Martyr on the Eucharistic Service, c. 150

Justin describes elements of this service twice : in ch. 65 he speaks of a convert's First Communion ; in ch. 67 he speaks of the regular weekly Communion Service. The two accounts are here conflated to give the sequence.

- 133 On the day which is called the Day of the Sun there is an assembly of all who live in the towns or in the country ; and the Memoirs of the Apostles [Gospels] or the Writings of the Prophets [Old Testament] are read, as long as time permits. Then the Reader ceases, and the President [presiding Minister] speaks [preaches], admonishing us and

exhorting us to imitate these excellent examples. Then we arise all together and offer prayers [of intercession and supplication]. (67)

We salute one another with a kiss when we have ended the prayers. Then is brought to the President of the brethren bread, and a cup of water and wine. And he takes them and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, and gives thanks at length, that we are deemed worthy of these things at His hand. When he has completed the prayers and thanksgivings all the people present assent by saying 'Amen'. When the President has given thanks and all the people have assented, those who are called deacons with us give to those present a portion of the Eucharistic bread, and wine and water, and carry it away to those that are absent. (65)

And they that are prosperous and wish to do so give what they will, each after his choice. What is collected is deposited with the President, who gives aid to the orphans and widows and such as are in want by reason of sickness and other cause; and to those also that are in prison, and to strangers from abroad. In fact to all that are in need he is a protector. (67)

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology*, chapters as indicated above (B.).

Justin Martyr on the Meaning of the Eucharist

134 This food is called among us 'Eucharist', of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for remission of sins and unto a second birth [baptism], and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food blessed by prayer of words from Him,¹ and by which our blood and flesh by assimilation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 66 (A.-N.C.L.—S.*).

¹ This refers to the Words of Institution.

Irenaeus on the Eucharist, c. 190

- 135** As the Church offers in simplicity of heart, her gift is rightly considered a pure sacrifice with God . . . For we are bound to make our oblation to God and in all things to be found grateful to God the Creator, with a pure mind and faith without hypocrisy, with fervent love offering the first fruits of His own creatures . . . For we offer to Him the things that are His, proclaiming harmoniously the unity of flesh and spirit. For as the bread of the earth, receiving the invocation of God, is no longer common bread but Eucharist, consisting of two things, an earthly and a heavenly; so also our bodies, partaking of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, having the hope of eternal resurrection.

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4 : 18. 4-6 (B.).

The Account of Tertullian, c. 200

- 136** We meet in gathering and congregation to approach God in prayer, massing our forces to surround Him . . . We pray also for Emperors, for their ministers and those in authority, for the security of the world, for peace on earth . . . We meet to read the Books of God . . . With these holy words we feed our faith, we lift up our hope, we confirm our confidence; and no less we reinforce our teaching by inculcation of God's precepts.

There is, besides, exhortation in our gatherings, rebuke, Divine censure. For judgment is passed, and it carries great weight, as it must among men certain that God sees them; and it is a notable foretaste of judgment to come, if any man has so sinned as to be banished from all share in our prayer, our assembly, and all holy intercourse. Our presiding ministers are presbyters of proved character, men who have reached this honour not for a price, but by character.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 39 : 1-4 (Glover*).

Tertullian does not specifically mention the Eucharist, but note the reference to 'holy intercourse' and the echoes of Justin's account.

An Early Eucharistic Canon, c. 200

137 *Bishop*—The Lord be with you.

People—And with thy spirit.

Bishop—Lift up your hearts.

People—We lift them up unto the Lord.

Bishop—Let us give thanks unto the Lord.

People—It is meet and right.

Bishop—We give Thee thanks, O God, through Thy beloved Son¹ Jesus Christ, whom Thou didst send to us in the last times to be a Saviour and Redeemer and the messenger of Thy will; who is Thy inseparable Word, through whom Thou madest all things, and in whom Thou wast well pleased. Thou didst send Him from heaven into the Virgin's womb; He was conceived and was incarnate, and was shown to be Thy Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin; who, fulfilling Thy will and preparing for Thee a holy people, stretched out His hands in suffering, that He might free from suffering them that believed on Thee.

Who, when he was being betrayed to His voluntary suffering, that He might destroy death, break the chains of the Devil, tread Hell underfoot, bring forth the righteous [from it] and set a bound [to it], and that He might manifest His Resurrection, took bread and gave thanks to Thee and said: 'Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you.' Likewise also the cup, saying: 'This is my blood which is shed for you. As oft as ye do this ye shall do it in remembrance of me.'

Wherefore we, being mindful of His death and resurrection, do offer unto Thee this bread and this cup, giving thanks unto Thee for that Thou hast deemed us worthy to stand before Thee and minister as Thy priest. And we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst send Thy Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Thy Holy Church; and that Thou wouldst grant Him to all the saints who partake, making them one, for fulfilment of the Holy Spirit and for the confirmation of their faith in truth; that we may praise and glorify Thee through Thy Son¹ Jesus Christ, through whom

¹The word translated can mean both 'Son' and 'Servant', as in Acts 3: 13.

be glory and honour to Thee, to the Father and to the Son with the Holy Spirit in Thy Holy Church, both now and for ever. Amen.

—Hippolytus, *Apostolic Tradition* 4 (B.*).

The above canon is the source of the Eucharistic services of the Greek and Eastern Churches. It may be Egyptian.

Origen on the Eucharist, c. 248

- 138 We have a symbol of our thanksgiving to God in the bread which is called 'Eucharist'...

We give thanks to the Creator of the universe and eat the loaves that are presented with thanksgiving and prayer over the gifts, so that by the prayer they become a certain holy body which sanctifies those who partake of it with a pure intention.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 8 : 57 and 33 (C.).

Cyprian on the Eucharistic Sacrifice, c. 250

- 139 If Christ Jesus our Lord is Himself the High Priest of God the Father and first offered Himself as a sacrifice to the Father, then assuredly the priest acts truly in Christ's room, when he imitates what Christ did, and he offers then a true and complete sacrifice to God the Father, if he so begin to offer as he sees Christ Himself has offered.

—Cyprian, *Epistles* 63 : 14 (B.).

Some Details of the Service

Facing East

- 140 Others... believe that the sun is our god. The idea no doubt has originated from our being known to turn to the east in prayer¹...

We devote Sunday to rejoicing, from a far different reason than sun-worship.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 16 (A.-N.C.L.).

¹ Facing east was connected with the fact that Jesus rose from the dead early in the morning; there was also a belief that He would come again from the east. See also 173.

Standing for the Gospel

- 141 The Apostles appointed, that at the conclusion of all the Scriptures, the Gospel should be read, as being the seal of all the Scriptures ; and the people should listen to it standing on their feet, because it is the glad tidings of the salvation of all men.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 7 (Cureton, *A.S.D.*).

This custom of the Church at Edessa about 250 was widespread in the early church. Compare 36.

The Language of Worship

- 142 Christians do not even use in their prayers the names applied to God in the Divine Scriptures.¹ But the Greeks speak in Greek, and the Romans in Latin ; and so each one according to his language prays to God and sings His praises as he is able. And the Lord of every language hears those who pray in every language as though He were hearing one utterance, so to speak, the same meaning expressed by the various languages.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 8 : 37 (C.).

¹ That is, they do not use the original Hebrew names.

Subjects of Intercession

The emphasis of the Apologists is on prayer for the Emperor, to show that they are not disloyal in refusing to worship the Emperor's image and burn incense to it.

- 143 For all our Emperors . . . we pray for a life prolonged ; for security to the Empire ; for brave armies, a faithful senate, a virtuous people, the world at rest. (30)

We pray . . . for the delay of the final consummation . . . We know that a mighty shock impending over the whole earth—in fact, the end of all things, threatening dreadful woes—is only retarded by the continued existence of the Roman Empire.¹ We have no desire, then, to be overwhelmed by these dire events ; and in praying that their

¹ A possible interpretation of II Thessalonians 2 : 6-7.

coming may be delayed, we are lending our aid to Rome's duration. (39 and 32)

A large benevolence is enjoined upon us, even so far as to supplicate God for our enemies, and to beseech blessings on our persecutors. (31)

—Tertullian, *Apology*, chapters as indicated above (A.-N.C.L.).

144 [We pray] both for ourselves . . . and for all men everywhere, with all our hearts, that as we have learned the truth so we may also be counted worthy to be found good citizens and guardians of the commandments, that we may be saved with an eternal salvation.

—Justin Martyr, *I Apology* 65 (B.).

For prayer for the state in the Persian Church, see 392.

Repeating of Psalms

145 The Apostles appointed, In the various services of the Church repeat, day by day, David's songs of praise.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 19 (Cureton, A.S.D.).

The Singing of Psalms and Hymns

Up to the fourth century the only hymns normally sung in church services were the Psalms, and such hymns as the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis found in the New Testament ; and the practice of hymn-singing was only found in the East. Other hymns were written (see, e.g. 341), but used privately, or at the Love-Feast.

In the following passage Augustine is speaking of the opposition of Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, to the Arian Emperor Valentinian, in 385.

146 The devoted people kept guard in the church, prepared to die with their Bishop, Thy servant . . . This was the time that the custom began, after the manner of the Eastern Church, that hymns and psalms should be sung, so that the people would not be worn out with the tedium of lamentation. This custom, retained from then till now, has been

imitated by many, indeed, by almost all Thy congregations throughout the rest of the world.

—Augustine, *Confessions* 9 : 15 (L.C.C.).

Ambrose himself wrote hymns, and had to face the criticism that this was a clever innovation.

- 147 They assert that the people have been beguiled by the strains of my hymns. I do not deny this . . . For what can be more powerful than the confession of the Trinity, which is daily celebrated by the mouth of the whole people ? All of them zealously desire to make profession of their faith ; they know how to confess in verse the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Thus all have become teachers who were scarcely able to be disciples.

—Ambrose, *Sermon against Auxentius* 34 (L.F.*).

A Hymn of Confession to the Trinity

The *Gloria in Excelsis*, based originally on Luke 2 : 14, is an ancient hymn, which developed in different ways. The following are three ancient versions.

A Greek Version

- 148 Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory, O Lord, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty ; O Lord, the only begotten Son Jesus Christ ; and O Holy Spirit.

O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer. Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy upon us. For Thou only art holy ; Thou only art the Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

—From *Codex Alexandrinus*, Fifth Century (K.2*).

A Syriac Version

149 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and a good hope to mankind. We worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we exalt Thee, Being who art from eternity hidden nature and cannot be fathomed, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Who dwellest in the glorious light, whom no man hath seen, nor can see, who alone art holy, and alone mighty, and alone immortal.

We confess Thee through the Mediator of our blessings, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of the World, and the Son of the Highest.

O Lamb of the living God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou who sittest at the right hand of the Father, receive our request. For Thou art our God, and Thou art our Lord, and Thou art our King, and Thou art our Saviour, and Thou art the Forgiver of our sins. The eyes of all men hang on Thee. Jesus Christ, glory to God, Thy Father, and to Thee, and to the Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

—Syriac *Gloria in Excelsis* (Maclean and Browne, *The Catholicos of the East*, pp. 230-1).

Part of a Chinese Version

The Chinese version, written about 780, is much longer. The following lines represent 'O Lamb... Forgiver of our sins' in the Syriac.

150 The Everlasting King of Life, His gracious, joyous Lamb, For all, for all, He bore the woe, nor shrank from toil, but came To free all living creatures from the heaped-up load of sin, Able is he to save men's souls and make them free from blame.

At God the Father's own right hand His proper station is. His throne again beyond all bounds is now exalted higher. Our great Preceptor bids Him beg¹ and all men towards Him pray;

¹ God calls on Christ to intercede for men.

Send down Thy raft² to save the souls that toss on flood of fire.

Our great Preceptor, who is He?—the Father of all grace.
Our great Preceptor, who is He?—Him Holy Lord we call.
Our great Preceptor, who is He?—He is our Spirit-King.³
Our great Preceptor, He can be the Saviour of us all.

—*The Hymn of the Saved to the Trinity (C.T.D.).*

² A Chinese metaphor for salvation.

³ Note the Trinitarian interpretation of the Syriac 'God...Lord...King'.

A Hymn of Praise to God

The 'Te Deum Laudamus' was originally written by Niceta of Remesiana (c. 340-414). It was afterwards enlarged and altered. In the original form, the first stanza speaks of God's praise by the whole creation, the second God's praise by the Church, as Trinity, the third praise to Christ, and prayer.

151 Thee we praise as God, Thee we acknowledge as Lord,
The eternal Father all the earth doth worship,
To thee all angels, to Thee the heavens and all the powers
therein,
To Thee cherubim and seraphim continually do cry aloud :
Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of the glory of Thy majesty.

Thee the glorious company of the Apostles,
Thee the renowned regiment of the Prophets,
Thee the white-robed army of Martyrs praises,¹
Thee throughout the world the holy Church confesses :
The Father of an infinite majesty,
Thy worshipful true only-begotten Son,
Also the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ, Thou art the eternal
Son of the Father ;
When Thou tookest² man upon Thee to deliver [him] Thou
didst not shudder at the Virgin's womb.

¹ These three lines are taken almost unaltered from Cyprian, *On Mortality* 26. 'Prophets' means Christian Prophets. See 50.

² Or 'wast about to take'. This means the Incarnation. Compare 268.

Thou having conquered the sting of death didst open the kingdom of heaven to believers ;

Thou sitting at the right hand of God, in the glory of the Father art believed to be about to come as Judge.

We therefore pray Thee help Thy servants
Whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood,
Make them to be dowered^s with Thy saints with glory everlasting.

—Niceta of Remesia, *Te Deum Laudamus* (Burn).

^s By a strange copyist's error, *numerari* (numbered) was written in one MS by mistake for *munerari* (rewarded), and so translated by Cranmer in the *Book of Common Prayer*.

3. THE AGAPE, OR LOVE-FEAST

I Corinthians 11 : 20-34 makes it clear that the early Christians ate the Lord's Supper along with a communal meal, or after it, but the abuse of this custom probably led to the sacrament and the meal being separated. The meal is called a 'Love-Feast' in Jude 12. In Bythinia in 112 it was eaten on the Sunday evening after the day's work was over, and Pliny forbade it (see 346). In the passage below, Tertullian describes a Love-Feast in North Africa about 200.

- 152 The modest supper-room of the Christians . . . Our feast explains itself by its name. The Greeks call it Love ['Agape']¹. Whatever it costs, our out-lay in the name of piety is gain, since with the good things of the feast we benefit the needy . . . A particular respect is shown to the lowly . . . As it is an act of religious service, it permits no vileness or immodesty. The participants, before reclining, taste first of prayer to God. As much is eaten as satisfies the cravings of hunger ; as much is drunk as befits the chaste. They say that it is enough, as those who remember that even during the night they have to worship God ; they talk as those who know that the Lord is one of their audience. After hands have been washed, and lights brought in, each is asked to stand up and sing, as well as he can, a hymn to God, either one from the Holy Scriptures, or one he has made up himself . . . As the feast commenced with prayer, so with prayer it is closed. We go away from it . . . to be as careful about our modesty and chastity as if we had been at a school of virtue rather than a banquet.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 39 (A.N.C.L.*).

¹ Tertullian is writing in Latin.

The love-feast died out shortly afterwards in the West. It survived longer in the East; the last mention of it is in the following passage, dated 340. See also 197 for Ignatius's view.

- 153 If anyone despise those who in faith observe the Agape, and for the honour of the Lord invite their brethren, and refuses to take part in these invitations because he lightly esteems the matter, let him be anathema.

—Council of Gangra, Canon 11 (Morison, *St. Basil and his Rule*, Appendix C).

C. OTHER RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

I. FASTING

Fasting was practised in the early Church prior to special occasions, like the baptism of new converts (see 116); on a weekly basis, usually on Friday in memory of the Passion; for an annual period before Easter; and on occasions of great distress. Monks laid special stress on fasting and abstinence (see 424-429). Practice about the time and manner of fasting was very varied indeed.

False and True Fasting

154 As I was fasting, seated on a certain mountain, and thanking the Lord for all His dealings with me, I saw the Shepherd¹ sitting beside me, and saying, 'Why have you come here so early?'

'Because, sir,' said I, 'I am keeping a station.'

'What,' said he, 'is a station?'

'I am fasting, sir,' said I, '... just as I have been accustomed to do.'

'You do not know how to fast to God,' said he, 'and this useless fast that you are keeping to Him is not a fast.'

'Why do you say so, sir?' said I...

'Listen,' said he... 'First of all, guard against every evil word and every evil desire, and cleanse your heart from all the vanities of this world. If you observe these things, your fast will be perfect. And this is what you must do: when you have completed what has been written above, on the day on which you fast, you must taste nothing but bread and water, and you must estimate the amount of the cost for that day which you are going to observe, of the articles of food you would have eaten, and give it to a widow or an orphan or somebody who is in want, and so you will be humble-minded, so that as a result of your humility the man who receives it may fill his soul and pray to the Lord for you. So if you carry out your fast the way I command you, your sacrifice will be acceptable in the sight of God,...

¹ An Angel who reveals God's will to Hermas. Hermas wrote in Rome about 100, and his book is mentioned in the Muratorian Fragment (see 211).

and the service carried out in this way is right and joyous and acceptable to the Lord. This is the way you must observe these things, with your children and all your family, and if you observe them you will be blessed, and all who hear them and observe them will be blessed, and whatever they ask of the Lord they will receive.'

—Hermas, *The Shepherd*, Parable 5: 1. 1-4 and 3. 5-9 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

Days to Fast and Days not to Fast

- 155** Your fasts must not be on the same days with the hypocrites [i.e. the Jews, echoing Matthew 6: 16], for they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you must fast on Wednesday and Friday.

—*Didache* 8: 1 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

- 156** We count fasting or kneeling in worship on the Lord's Day to be unlawful. We rejoice in the same privilege also from Easter to Pentecost.

—Tertullian, *On the Soldier's Crown*, 3 (*A.-N.C.L.**).

The Lenten Fast

The following is an extract from a letter from Irenaeus about 190 A.D., quoted by Eusebius.

- 157** Some think that they ought to fast for one day, some for two, others for still more; some make their 'day' last forty hours on end. Such variations in the observance did not originate in our own day, but very much earlier.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5: 24 (W.).

The practice of the 40-day Lenten Fast was established in the Church at Edessa by about 250.

- 158** The Apostles appointed: Forty days before the day of the Passion of our Saviour fast ye, and then celebrate the Day of the Passion, and the Day of the Resurrection, because our

Lord Himself also, the Lord of the festival, fasted forty days.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 7 (Cureton, *A.S.D.*).

Varieties in Fasting about 400

159 The fasts before Easter are differently observed. Those at Rome fast three successive weeks before Easter, leaving out Saturdays and Sundays. The Illyrians, Achaïans and Alexandrians observe a fast of six weeks, which they call 'the Forty Days' Fast'. Others, beginning their fast from the seventh week before Easter, and fasting three [periods of] five days only, and that at intervals, yet call that time 'the Forty Days' Fast'...

There is also a disagreement about abstinence from food... Some wholly abstain from things that have life; others feed on fish only of all living creatures. Many, together with fish, eat fowl also, saying that according to Moses [Genesis 1:20] these were also made out of the waters. Some abstain from eggs and all kinds of fruits; others feed on dry bread only; and others do not even eat this. Others again fast till three o'clock in the afternoon, and then eat any kind of food without distinction.

—Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 5: 22. 31-39 (*G.E.H.**).

For some further reference to fasting, see **14, 160, 181.**

2. FESTIVALS AND SAINTS' DAYS

The Easter Controversy, c. 190

160 It was at that stage that a controversy of great significance took place, because all the Asian¹ dioceses thought that in accordance with ancient tradition they ought to observe the fourteenth day of the lunar month as the beginning of the Paschal festival—the day on which the Jews had been commanded to sacrifice the lamb : on that day, no matter which day of the week it might be, they must without fail bring the fast to an end. But nowhere else in the world was it customary to arrange their celebrations in that way : in accordance with Apostolic tradition, they preserved the view which still prevails, that it was improper to end the fast on any day other than that of our Saviour's resurrection [Sunday].

Synods in Palestine, Rome, Pontus, Gaul and Edessa took this view, and it was also the custom in Alexandria.

The Asian bishops . . . were headed by Polycrates, who in a letter which he wrote to Victor² and the Roman Church sets out in the following terms the tradition that he had received.

The letter refers to the Apostle (deacon ?) Philip, the Apostle John, both buried in Ephesus ; Polycarp of Smyrna (see 128, 350) and other martyrs, and their tradition.

‘ All of these kept the fourteenth day of the month . . . in accordance with the Gospel, not deviating in the least but following the rule of the Faith. Last of all I too, Polycrates, the least of you all, act according to the tradition of my family . . . Seven of them were bishops and I am the eighth, and my family have always kept the day when the people put away the leaven. So I, my friends, after spending sixty-five years in the Lord's service and conversing with Christians from all parts of the world, and going carefully through all Holy Scripture, am not scared of threats. Better people than I have said : “ We must obey God rather than men ” [Acts 5 : 29].’

Victor tried to excommunicate the Asian Churches, but Irenaeus intervened, quoting previous Bishops of Rome who had

¹ i.e. of the Province of Asia, as in Revelation 1 : 4 and Acts 16 : 6.

² Bishop of Rome.

not allowed difference of opinion on this matter to break their communion. Peace was restored, and uniformity not enforced, but later it became universal custom for Easter to be a Sunday.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5 : 23-25 (W.).

Christmas

January 6

161 Again the Apostles appointed: Celebrate the day of the Epiphany of our Saviour, which is the chief of the festivals of the Church, on the sixth day of the latter Qanun [6th January].

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 6 (Cureton, A.S.D.).

This date was observed in the Eastern Churches till the Fifth century, and in Jerusalem till 549. The Armenian Church still celebrates Christmas on this date, and the Syrian Orthodox Church in South India till recently celebrated the 7th January. In other churches the name 'Epiphany' ('Appearing') is retained, but it is a separate feast—the appearing of Christ to the Gentiles.

December 25

The choice of December 25 in the West was no doubt in order to Christianise the Roman Festival of Saturnalia. For this attitude to pagan customs, compare **75**.

162 25 December. Christ born in Bethlehem of Judea.¹

—*Philocalian Calendar*, Rome, 336 A.D. (D.C.C. article 'Christmas').

¹ The actual date of the birth of Christ is unknown.

Saints' Days

After the martyrdom of Polycarp (see **350**) the Jews tried to prevent the magistrate from granting his body to the Christians, lest they should make it an object of worship.

163 It will never at any time be possible for us to abandon Christ—who, blameless on behalf of sinners, suffered for the salvation of them that are being saved, throughout the

whole world—and to worship some other. For Him, as Son of God, we adore; the martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we reverence as they deserve on account of their unsurpassable loyalty to their own King and Teacher.

But the centurion decided to burn the body.

So we afterwards took up his bones, more valuable than precious stones and finer than gold, and laid them where it was fitting. There the Lord will permit us, as shall be possible to us, to assemble ourselves together in joy and gladness, and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom, alike in memory of them that have fought before, and for the training and preparation of them that are to fight hereafter.

—*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 17 : 2-3 and 18 : 2-3 (Jackson—S.).

- 164 Again the Apostles appointed, that all those who depart out of this world with the good testimony of the Faith of Christ, and with affliction for His name's sake, make ye a commemoration of them on the day on which they were put to death.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 18 (Cureton, A.S.D.).

The above passage shows that by 250 this custom was established at Edessa. It became universal in the churches after the great persecutions of Diocletian (303-311) and Shapur (339-379). For other references to relics, see 168-170, 183.

3. PILGRIMAGES AND RELICS

Pilgrimages to the Holy Places in Palestine, and to the tombs of the martyrs, did not become widespread till the Fourth Century. Constantine built churches on the traditional sites of the Nativity and the Holy Sepulchre, and his mother Helena claimed to have discovered part of the True Cross. Pilgrimages often included the visiting of relics, especially the bones of martyrs. Monasteries, and the dwellings of solitary hermits, were also visited by pilgrims.

The pilgrimage to Jerusalem was linked by Cyril of Jerusalem (350-386) with catechetical lectures and baptisms at the Easter season. It had its abuses, and was strongly criticised by Gregory of Nyssa and Jerome about 390.

Egeria at Jerusalem, c. 415

Egeria in her pilgrimage visited places like Edessa, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Mount Sinai and the Egyptian monasteries. She was present on Easter morning in Jerusalem.

165 The whole multitude assembles before cockcrow, in as great numbers as the place can hold, . . . outside the [Church] doors, where lights are hanging for the purpose. And for fear that they should not be there at cockcrow they come beforehand and sit down there. Hymns and responses are repeated, . . . the custom being that the Holy Places are not opened before cockcrow. Now as soon as the first cock has crowed, the Bishop arrives and enters the Cave [Holy Sepulchre] . . . All the doors are opened and the whole multitude enters the Church of the Resurrection,¹ where countless lights are already burning.

After three responsive psalms and prayers, incense is burned in the Holy Sepulchre.

Then the Bishop, standing inside the rails, takes the Book of the Gospel, and proceeding to the door, himself reads [the account of] the Resurrection of the Lord. [It begins with the Passion, and many are moved to groans and tears]. After the reading of the Gospel, the Bishop goes out, and is accompanied to the Cross by all the people with hymns.

¹ For the location of this and other places, see the next passage.

There again a psalm is repeated and prayer is made, after which he blesses the people and dismisses them.

The bishop goes home. Monks and others stay in the Church; many people go home to get some sleep.

Now at daybreak, because it is the Lord's Day, everyone goes to the greater Church, built by Constantine, which is situated in Golgotha behind the Cross, where all things are done which are customary everywhere on the Lord's Day. But the custom here is that, of all the priests who take their seats, as many as are willing preach, and after them all the Bishop preaches, and these sermons are always on the Lord's Day, to instruct people in the Scriptures and in the love of God . . . People are not dismissed till 10 or 11 a.m.

—*The Pilgrimage of Egeria* 24 : 8-25 : 1 (McClure & Feltoe.*).

A Description of the Sites of the Crucifixion and Resurrection

Arculf, a Bishop from Gaul, visited the Holy Places in the Seventh Century, and Adamnan, (Abbot of Iona 679-704) recorded his description. Bede later copied Adamnan's account. It gives a clear picture of the lay-out of the places visited by Egeria on Easter morning.

166 For those entering the city of Jerusalem from the northern side, the lay-out of the streets makes the Church of Constantine, known as the Martyrdom, the first of the Holy Places to be visited. This . . . is the place where his mother Helena discovered the Cross of our Lord. To the west, the Church of Golgotha comes into view, where can be seen the rock on which once stood the Cross, with the Body of our Lord nailed to it : it now supports an enormous silver Cross, over which hangs a great bronze wheel bearing lamps . . . To the west of this stands the Church of . . . our Lord's Resurrection, circular in shape, surrounded by three walls, and supported on twelve columns . . . In the centre is the circular Tomb of our Lord, cut out of the rock, and a man standing inside it can touch the roof with his hand.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, 5 : 17 (L.S.-P.).

The Monk Cyprian at Jerusalem, Eighth Century

Although rather later than our period, the following passage describes so well the feelings of an Eastern pilgrim that it is included here.

167 [God] inflamed his heart and set his mind on fire with the desire, hotter than fire, of going to Jerusalem to see the Holy Place where Christ our Lord manifested to mankind His bodily dispensation for the sake of their redemption... Having renounced earthly love, and made himself a stranger to love for parents, brethren and human kind, he took upon himself the holy Book of the Gospels, and thus like an athlete he began to depart. He brought his journey to an end in hot haste, leaving out places of tarrying for rest, like a man who hurries home to his father's house and to his family whom he has not seen for a long time.

And when he had arrived in Jerusalem and had worshipped in all the Holy Places—the place where Christ was baptised in the Jordan, and the Temple [site], and Golgotha, and the Sepulchre, and the Upper Chamber, and the Mount of Olives—in which the redemption of our race by a Son of our nature was completed, his soul rejoiced, and his spirit was satisfied, and he rested from the toil and weariness of his way; and he praised and glorified Him, by trust in whom he had been eager to travel and see the places which His adorable footsteps [had trodden].

Afterwards he visited Mount Sinai, Alexandria, and the cells of the Egyptian ascetics.

—Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors* 6 : 3 (W.-B.*).

The Relics of St. Thomas at Edessa

The earliest reference to relics of a martyr is in the story of Polycarp (see **163**). The following passage suggests that some, or all, of the remains of St. Thomas were brought by a merchant from India to Edessa, in the Fourth Century.

168 The Evil One wailed: 'Where, now, is there a place for me to flee to from the righteous? I stirred up death to slay the Apostles, that I might be safe from their blows. By their deaths now more exceedingly, I am cruelly beaten. The

Apostle whom I slew before me in India is before me in Edessa: he is here wholly and also there! I went there, there was he: here and there I have found him, and been grieved.'

[Refrain]: Blessed is the might that dwells in the hallowed bones! . . .

'Moses the chosen carried the bones [of Joseph] in faith, as for gain. And if a great prophet believed that there is benefit in bones, the merchant did well to believe, and did well to call himself merchant . . . His storehouse has made me [Satan] very poor: his storehouse has been opened in Edessa, and has enriched the great city with benefit.'

[Refrain]: Blessed is the might that dwells in the hallowed bones!

—Ephraim the Syrian, *Nisibene Hymns* 42, verses 1 and 3 (*N.Ö.P.-N.F.*).

The above hymn is dated between 363 and 373. Rufinus, who lived in Edessa from 371 to 396, confirms this.

- 169** Edessa is a city of the believing peoples of Mesopotamia, adorned by the remains of Thomas the Apostle.

—Rufinus, *Ecclesiastical History* 2:5 *P.L.* 21, col. 513 (Y.).

A Theft of Relics from Antioch, c. 631

The following incident, with its questionable and naive ethical basis, took place as the embassy mentioned in **385** was returning from Constantinople to Persia.

- 170** Now while these holy men [the Patriarch and several bishops] were passing through the city of Antioch, and while they were resting in one of the churches of this city, in which they tarried many days, Mar Ishu'-Yab [later the Patriarch Ishu'-Yab III, 650-660] saw a white marble casket upon which was the sign of the adorable Cross, and to this, united to the chariot of its honour, were two figures of cherubs [attached] . . . And he saw the mighty deeds that were wrought there by means of it, and he learned that there were inside it some of the bones, and portions of the bodies of the blessed Apostles, and being hot with all the desire of his

love for that casket in which these were laid, he offered up prayers . . . that by his means it might be brought to this country [Persia] . . . Not knowing what to do, he entrusted this matter to God, asking that, while he . . . used all human efforts, Christ would protect and defend him in a Divine manner. This actually happened, for he stole it and brought it with him here with all the honour due to the holy pearls it contained.

—Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors* 2 : 5 (W.-B.).

4. PRIVATE PRAYER AND BIBLE STUDY

Private Prayer

The following information and instructions seem to refer to private prayer at home.

- 171** Do not pray like the hypocrites, but pray this as the Lord commanded in His Gospel: 'Our Father . . .' Three times a day pray thus.

—*Didache* 8 : 2 (Goodspeed, *A.F.*).

- 172** [To heaven] we lift our eyes, with hands outstretched, because free from sin; with head uncovered, for we have nothing to be ashamed of; finally, without a monitor, because it is from the heart we supplicate.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 30 (*A.-N.C.L.**).

Origen's treatise *On Prayer*, which is a manual of instruction for private prayer, includes some interesting practical details.

- 173** The Man who links together his prayer with deeds of duty and fits seemly actions with his prayer is the man who prays without ceasing, for his virtuous deed or the commandments he has fulfilled are taken up as part of his prayer . . . The whole life of the saint is one mighty integrated prayer. Of such prayer, part is what is usually called 'prayer', and ought not to be performed less than three times a day [midnight, noon, and evening]. (12 : 2)

The posture of the praying man should give outward expression to his inward disposition of mind: it is best.

if he stretches forth his soul, so to speak, before his hands, and stretches his mind to God before his eyes, and before he takes a standing position raises his intelligence from the ground and makes it stand before the Lord of the universe. [Prayer should normally be made standing with hands outstretched¹ and eyes lifted up, but there may be exceptions.] It is fitting that permission be given sometimes to pray sitting because of some disease of the feet which cannot be regarded

¹ Note that this was the posture of the Himyarite women martyrs. See 408.

lightly, or even lying down because of fevers and such sicknesses. [Kneeling is recommended for the confession of sin.] (31 : 2, 3)

The praying man should always face the east.

The region towards the sunrising clearly indicates that we ought to make our prayers in that direction in symbolic fashion as though the soul beheld the rising of the true light. But since the door of the house may face in any direction, if a man desires rather to make his intercessions in the direction that the house opens, on the plea that the sight of the heaven has something more inviting about it than looking at the wall, . . . we must say to him that since it is by arrangement that the buildings of men open towards this or that region, while it is by nature that the east is preferred before the other regions, we must put that which is by nature before that which is by arrangement.

Origen recommends a definite order in praying, beginning and ending with praise.

According to our ability at the beginning and exordium [introduction] of our prayer we must address praise to God through Christ, who is praised together with Him in the Holy Spirit, . . . and after this each must place thanksgiving, both general—enumerating with thanksgiving God's benefits to the many—and for those things which each has received privately from God ; and after thanksgiving it seems to me that one ought to be a bitter accuser of one's own sins before God, and to ask first for healing so as to be delivered from the state that leads to sin, and secondly for remission of what is past ; and after confession, in the fourth place it seems we must add petition for the great and heavenly gifts for ourselves, and for people in general, and also for our families and friends ; and in addition to all this, our prayer ought to end in praise to God through Christ in the Holy Spirit (33 : 1).

—Origen, *On Prayer*, sections as noted (Jay).

Individual Bible Study

There is evidence that in the first few centuries, when the languages of the Bible and its various translations (see 218) were living, and many Christians could read, the Bible or parts of it were studied by ordinary Christians in their homes. The homilies of Chrysostom, for instance (see 231-234), presuppose that their readers will be able to consult the Scriptures for themselves.

- 174 Sit at home and read in the Law, in the Book of Kings, and in the Prophets, and in the Gospel which is their fulfilment.

—*The Didascalia of the Apostles* 2 (E.R.E. 2 : p. 606).

The *Didascalia* is a Syriac document, earlier than 250.

- 175 What lover of books was there who did not find a friend in Pamphilius? If he knew of any of them being in want of the necessities of life, he helped them to the full extent of his power. He would not only lend them copies of the Holy Scriptures to read, but would give them most readily, and that not only to men, but to women also if he saw that they were given to reading. He therefore kept a store of manuscripts, so that he might be able to give them to those who wished for them whenever occasion demanded.

—Jerome, *Apology against Rufinus* 1 : 9 . (N. & P.-N.F.).

D. COMMUNITY LIFE AND CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. HELPING THOSE IN NEED

The Church in Rome

The following is a quotation from a letter of Dionysius of Corinth to Bishop Soter of Rome, about 165.

- 176 From the start it has been your custom to treat all Christians with unfailing kindness, and to send contributions to many churches in every city, sometimes alleviating the distress of those in need, sometimes providing for your brothers in the mines¹ by the contributions you have sent from the start. Thus you Romans have observed the ancestral Roman custom, which your revered Bishop Soter has not only maintained but enlarged, by generously providing the abundant supplies distributed among God's people, and by encouraging with inspired words fellow-Christians who come to the city, as an affectionate father encourages his children.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4 : 23 (W.).

¹ Christian prisoners condemned to hard labour.

The Church in Carthage

- 177 On the monthly collection-day, every one who wants to, puts in a small donation, but only if he wants to, and only if he is able. There is no compulsion ; it is all voluntary. These gifts [are used] to support and bury poor people, to supply the needs of boys and girls who are destitute and orphans, and of old people who are confined now to the house ; shipwrecked people, too ; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in the prisons, for nothing else than their faithfulness to the cause of God's Church, they are looked after by their fellow-believers. . . . ' See ' [people say] ' how they love one another, . . . how they are ready even to die for one another ! ' . . . We call one another brothers.

We are your brothers as well, but Christians, who are all sons of God, sharing the Spirit and the truth of the Gospel, partake in a deeper brotherhood,

One in mind and soul, we do not hesitate to share our earthly goods.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 39 (*A.-N.C.L.**).

Charge to a Bishop at his Consecration

- 178 Show to the orphan the care of parents ; to the widows the care of husband ; to those of suitable age marriage ; for the craftsman obtain work ; to the incapable give alms ; for strangers provide a home ; for the sick visitation ; for prisoners assistance ; . . . for the young orphan¹ help that he may learn a trade.

—*Apostolic Constitutions*, 4 : 2 (Workman, *P.E.C.**).

¹ Probably one whose parents had suffered martyrdom.

Charity as a Means of Evangelism

An interesting witness to Christian Charity in the Fourth Century is the Pagan Emperor Julian. In 362 or 363 he wrote in the following terms to Arsacius, a Pagan High Priest:

- 179 Why should we not . . . pay attention to the means by which this impiety [i.e. Christianity] has increased, namely, loving service shown to strangers, care in burying the dead, and so-called sanctity of life ? All these, I feel, should really be practised by us . . . When none of the Jews beg, and the godless Galileans relieve both their own poor and ours, it is a crying shame that our poor should look in vain to us for help.

—Julian, *Epistles* 49 (Duncombe*).

A Persian Lady's Service to the Martyrs, c. 350

- 180 Yazd-andukht fed the martyrs of God out of her own private means all the time they were in prison. She procured for them all they needed, and would not accept help from anyone else . . . When the King [Shapur II] was about to depart, a eunuch who was a friend of hers told this Christian woman secretly that the holy martyrs were due to

be put to death the next morning. She had a meal prepared for them, washed their feet, distributed new white clothes among them, and lavished encouragements on them, taking care to say nothing of their coming punishment.

The martyrs suspected some reason for all the fuss, and asked her.

'Why are you asking me questions?' she replied. 'Believe me, I am only doing you the service that I ought.'

But the following morning she told them, encouraged them to stand firm, and asked them to pray for her.

—Assemani, *Acts of the Holy Martyrs of the East* 1, pp. 152-153. (French in Labourt *C.E.P.* pp. 60-61. Y.)

For references to Christian charity in the *Didache* see 73, and for Justin Martyr's reference, see 133.

2. THE QUALITY OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY LIFE

181 The Christians . . . have the commandments of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself engraved on their hearts, and they obey them, looking for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Most of the Ten Commandments, and the Golden Rule, are listed.

They comfort those who wrong them, and make friends with them . . . Their wives . . . are as pure as virgins, and their daughters modest ; and their men abstain from all unlawful intercourse and all uncleanness . . . As for their servants and slave-girls, or the children of these, if they have any,¹ they love them so much that they persuade them to become Christians ; and when they have done so, they call them brethren without distinction . . .

They love one another. They do not despise the widow or grieve the orphan. He who has distributes liberally to him who has not. If they see a [Christian] stranger, they bring him under their roof, and rejoice over him . . . They call themselves brethren, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and in God. When one of their poor passes away from the world, and any of them sees him, he provides for his burial according to his ability ; and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of Christ, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible to procure his release, they do it.

In cases of need, they are prepared to fast for two or three days to provide food for a hungry brother.

For Christ's sake they are ready to lay down their lives : they keep His commandments faithfully, . . . giving Him thanks every morning and every hour, for food and drink and every blessing. And if any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and give thanks to God, and they follow his body, as if he were going away from one place to another . . .

¹ Pagans often used their slaves to satisfy their lusts. See 416.

As men who know God, they ask from Him petitions which are right for Him to grant . . . And because they acknowledge the goodness of God towards them, lo ! because of them there flows forth the beauty that is in the world . . . Truly this people is a new people.

—Aristeides, *Apology* 15 : 3-11 and 16 : 1 and 4 (S.*)

For other references to the changed quality of the Christian life, see 14, 68, 107, 111, 177, 179, 181, 217, 400, 401, 412, 414.

181 When the bell sounded at midnight, he rose in haste and went to the church and, running, entered in advance of the others, alone; and bowing his knees in prayer he sank down beside the altar . . . Diomitt, the attendant . . . entering the church cried in a tearful voice: 'Where are you, where are you, Father? And groping in the darkness, since the lamps of the brothers had not yet been brought, he found the saint lying before the altar. Raising him a little, he placed the holy head upon his lap. Meanwhile the company of monks ran up with lights; and when they saw that their Father was dying, they began to lament. And as we have learned from some men who were present there, the saint, whose soul had not yet departed, opened his eyes, and looked around on either side, with wonderful joy and gladness of countenance; for he was gazing upon the holy angels who had come to meet him. Then Diomitt raised the holy right hand, to bless the saint's company of monks, and the venerable Father himself at the same time moved his hand, as much as he was able, in order that he might be seen to bless the brothers even by the movement of his hand, a thing that in the departure of his soul he could not do by voice. And after the holy benediction thus expressed he presently breathed out his spirit.

—Adamnan, *Life of Columba*, 2 : 25 (A.O. & M.O. Anderson).

The Death of Bede, the English Monk and Historian, 735

Right up to his death, Bede was at work, dictating two works to his fellow-monks. One was a translation he had made of the Gospel of John; the other some extracts from the works of Bishop Isidore of Seville.

3. THE CHRISTIAN ATTITUDE TO DEATH

As the quotation from Aristeides above (181) shows, Christians looked on death as 'going away from one place to another', and a cause for confident rejoicing. The martyrs faced death with confidence (see 350, 351, 389, 408). The following three eye-witness accounts of the deaths of outstanding Christians (two of them a little later than our period) give something of this joy.

The Death of Columba, the Irish Missionary, 597

182 When the beaten bell resounded at midnight, he rose in haste and went to the church and, running, entered in advance of the others, alone; and bowing his knees in prayer he sank down beside the altar... Diormit, the attendant, ... entering the church cried in a tearful voice: 'Where are you, where are you, Father?' And groping in the darkness, since the lamps of the brothers had not yet been brought, he found the saint lying before the altar. Raising him a little, he placed the holy head upon his lap.

Meanwhile the company of monks ran up with lights; and when they saw that their Father was dying, they began to lament. And as we have learned from some men who were present there, the saint, whose soul had not yet departed, opened his eyes, and looked around on either side, with wonderful joy and gladness of countenance; for he was gazing upon the holy angels who had come to meet him. Then Diormit raised the holy right hand, to bless the saint's company of monks, and the venerable Father himself at the same time moved his hand, as much as he was able, in order that he might be seen to bless the brothers even by the movement of his hand, a thing that in the departure of his soul he could not do by voice. And after the holy benediction thus expressed he presently breathed out his spirit.

—Adamnan, *Life of Columba*, 3 : 23 (A.O. & M.O. Anderson).

The Death of Bede, the English Monk and Historian, 735

Right up to his death, Bede was at work, dictating two works to his fellow-monks. One was a translation he had made of the Gospel of John; the other some extracts from the works of Bishop Isidore of Seville.

183 On the Tuesday before our Lord's Ascension his breathing became increasingly laboured, and his feet began to swell. Despite this he continued cheerfully to teach and dictate all day, saying from time to time, 'Learn quickly. I do not know how long I can continue, for my Lord may call me in a short while.' It seemed to us that he might well be aware of the time of his departure, and he spent that night without sleeping, giving thanks to God.

When dawn broke on Wednesday, he told us to write diligently what we had begun, and we did this till Terce¹. After Terce we walked in procession with the relics of the Saints as the custom of the day required, but one of us remained with him, who said, 'There is still one chapter missing in the book you have been dictating; but it seems hard that I should trouble you any further.' 'It is no trouble,' he answered: 'Take your pen and sharpen it, and write quickly.' But at None² he said to me, 'I have a few articles of value in my casket, such as pepper, linen and incense. Run quickly and fetch the priests of the monastery, so that I may distribute among them the gifts that God has given me.' In great distress I did as he bid me.

The monks came, and he asked them to offer masses and prayers for him after his death. They wept. But he said:

'If it be the will of my Maker, the time has come when I shall be freed from the body and return to Him who created me out of nothing when I had no being. I have had a long life,³ and the merciful Judge has ordered it graciously. The time of my departure is at hand, and my soul longs to see Christ my King in His beauty.' He also told us many other edifying things, and passed his last day happily until evening.

Then the same lad, named Wilbert, said again: 'Dear master, there is one sentence still unfinished.'

'Very well,' he replied: 'write it down.'

After a short while the lad said, 'Now it is finished.'

¹ 9 a.m. prayers.

² 3 p.m. prayers.

³ he was 62 years of age.

'You have spoken truly,' he replied: 'It is well finished. Now raise my head in your hands, for it would give me great joy to sit facing the holy place where I used to pray, so that I may sit and call on my Father.' And thus, on the floor of his cell, he chanted 'Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit' to its ending, and breathed his last.

—Cuthbert of Jarrow, *Letter to Cuthwin* (L.S.-P., *Bede*, Introduction pp. 19-20).

The Death of Elijah of Moka, an Eastern Missionary Bishop, c. 820

Thomas of Marga quotes Abraham, (later Patriarch of the East, 837-850), who was an eyewitness of the death of Elijah, the simple monk who had done remarkable pioneer missionary work among the animists and tree-worshippers of Azarbaijan.

184 While many of us were gathered together about him at the hour of his departure, he sat and spoke with us concerning his separation from us. And he commanded us to repeat the response from the baptismal service—'The doors of the spiritual marriage-chamber are opened for the absolution of men, while he sat, with his hands upon his knees. And when we had come to the passage 'Enter in then ye that are called to the joy which has been prepared for you' he opened his mouth three times [to join in the singing], and his soul departed from his body with the joy which was prepared for him. And we marvelled, and understood that he had actually seen and beheld with the hidden eye of his mind the happiness which had been prepared for him, and that it was because of this he had asked us to sing this baptismal response . . . Glory be to Christ our Lord who made him victorious !

—Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors* 5 : 11 (W.-B.*).

Ordinary Christians

The lives of ordinary Christian lay people, and their manner of dying, are not available on record, but some epitaphs of the first four centuries speak of what they believed.

185 Stafilius, peace be with you in God. Hail and farewell. (12)

- 186 O Father of all, take into Thy keeping Irene, Zoe, and Marcellus whom thou didst make; thine be the glory in Christ. (15)
- 187 Little Hermas, light, may you live in God the Lord Christ. Aged ten years seven months. (24)

Written by an uneducated man, and badly spelt.

- 188 Florentius set up this inscription for his well-deserving son Appronianus, who lived one year, nine months and five days. Since he was truly beloved by his grandmother and she saw that he was destined for death, she asked of the church that he should depart from this life a [baptised] believer. (40)
- 189 I, Petronia, wife of a Levite [i.e. deacon], of modest countenance, here lay down my bones and place them in their resting-place. Cease from weeping, my husband and sweet children, and believe that it is not right to mourn one that lives in God. (41)

—Nunn, *Christian Inscriptions*, numbers as quoted (B.).

4. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

The normal method of discipline in the Church was exclusion from the Lord's Supper and Christian fellowship. See 130, 132. The problem of the discipline of those who lapsed in time of persecution is referred to in 331.

Origen on Church Discipline

- 190 Christians mourn as dead those who have been overcome by licentiousness or some outrageous sin because they have perished and died to God. They admit them some time later as though they had risen from the dead, provided that they show a real conversion, though their period of probation is longer than that required of those who are joining the community for the first time. But they do not select those who have fallen after their conversion to Christianity for any office or administration in the Church of God, as it is called.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 3 : 51 (C.).

The Discipline of Converts from Paganism

The following quotation from a letter of Pope Gregory the Great to Augustine of Canterbury in 600 speaks of the problems of discipline among converts, especially with regard to forbidden degrees of marriage.

- 191 Since there are many among the English who, while they were still heathen, seem to have contracted these unlawful marriages, when they accept the faith they are to be instructed that this is a grave offence, and that they must abstain from it. Warn them of the terrible judgment of God lest their bodily desires incur the pains of eternal punishment. Nevertheless they are not on that account to be deprived of the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, lest they appear to be punished for sins committed unknowingly before they received the purification of baptism. For in these days the Church has to correct some things strictly, and allow others already established by custom ; others have to be tolerated for a while, in the hope that forbearance may sometimes eradicate an evil of which

she disapproves. But all who come to the Faith are to be warned against doing these things, and should any subsequently be guilty of them, they are to be forbidden to receive the Communion... For while these offences may to some extent be condoned in those who acted in ignorance, they must be severely punished in those who presume to sin knowingly.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People* 1 : 27 (L.S.-P.).

Restoration of Church Order at Riwardashir, 541

The discipline of ecclesiastics is generally more difficult than that of laymen. The following two examples show how it was carried out by the ablest of the Persian Patriarchs, Mar Aba I. (For other references to Mar Aba see 31, 87, 193, 399-406). Riwardashir, seat of the Metropolitan of Fars, at that time ruled over a province which included the Indian Church. Mar Aba visited it, along with four bishops. Its church order was in a chaotic state.

192 They remained there a long time. They confirmed the anathema, expulsion and deposition of Izhaq, who had been Bishop of this place, and had been justly deprived of the office and functions of the episcopate; of Ishu'-bakht who had followed him, and had proclaimed himself Bishop irregularly and in an unauthorised way; and of those who had been appointed, whether by Ishaq or by Ishu'-bakht, to the episcopal or some other ministerial office.

After Ishu'-bakht had shown signs of penitence for the above actions which had been done illegally, ... and when he had given his written consent willingly to his deposition and deprivation of ministerial status, authority, and episcopal office, ... the Patriarch and the bishops received him charitably, gave him the peace, and allowed him to exercise the functions he had received canonically, and even to remain in the priestly order, if he was prepared to receive ordination as a presbyter in the same way as all those who had been appointed priests or deacons by him or his predecessor Izhaq had been reordained—for they were treated mercifully, after they had shown signs of repentance and received the canonical laying-on of hands...

He also deprived Mar Aqaq, Bishop and Metropolitan, of these functions, and chose in his place the virtuous friend

of God, Mar Ma'na [II], who received the laying-on of hands from the Patriarch and the bishops . . . He was appointed Bishop of the City of Riwardashir and of its diocese, and Metropolitan of that City¹ and of all the cities of the countries of these provinces.

—*Judicial Acts of Mar Aba I* (French in Chabot, *S.O.* pp. 322-323. Y.).

¹ In other words, he exercised the functions previously carried out by both Ishu'-bakht and Izhaq. Probably these two had been rivals for power.

Anathema against a deposed Metropolitan

Abraham, a dissolute and irregularly-appointed Metropolitan of Gundeshapur, had sold church plate and given the money to prostitutes. He came to Ctesiphon hoping to get the Patriarch on his side, but Mar Aba only consented to meet him when he came barefoot, as a penitent. He was allowed to state his case, proved to be a liar, and persuaded to sign acceptance of his own deposition.

He then went off, raised a party of supporters, and tried to get the Persian authorities on his side. Even they despised him, and tried to imprison him. He was then excommunicated as follows.

193 This present Act, in which is included this deposition and sentence, has been made by the Patriarch, the Metropolitans and the Bishops who were with him, assembled in the city of Bait Lapat [Gundeshapur], and has been signed and confirmed by their seals, unanimously, in accordance with the authority of Christ [as stated in Matthew 18 : 20 and 18].

Therefore by this authority, I, Aba, Patriarch, [two] Metropolitans, and [eight] Bishops, have confirmed the censure and anathema made against Abraham, . . . and his deprivation of episcopal order, of the title of metropolitan, of the functions of the presbyterate and diaconate, and also of all clerical order.

Let no one be permitted to give him the Sacraments, either of wine or bread, until he has shown repentance and obtained from us permission in this respect, by an act of clemency on his behalf written and promulgated by me, the Patriarch, in accordance with the penitence he may show.

No one shall address him, call him, or think of him—in secret or in public, in word or in thought, from near or far,

or in any way forbidden by these writings—as possessing the name, functions, order, or authority of bishop, priest or deacon, or as belonging to any order of clergy.

Should anyone transgress any of the above orders :—

if it be a man, may he never again see his wife, his children, or his home !

if it be a woman, boy, or girl, may this sentence overtake them—let the anger of God rest upon them with the consent of all Christendom !

As for him who hears these writings and obeys them, may the blessing of Christ rest on him for ever !

—*Judicial Acts of Mar Aba I* (French in Chabot, *S.O.* p. 330. Y.).

An Example of the Breakdown of Discipline, 305

We may contrast the actions of a strong disciplinarian like Mar Aba I with the following account of actions taken at Cirta when the violence of Diocletian's persecution in that region was over. For the handing over of Scriptures there, see 358.

Secundus, Bishop of Tigisis and Metropolitan of Numidia, had summoned a council to elect a new Bishop of Cirta.

194 *Secundus*—Let us first see that all are duly qualified to act, and thus we shall be able to consecrate a Bishop. [To Donatus of Mascula.] It is alleged that you have been guilty of Betrayal [i.e. of surrendering the Scriptures].

Donatus—You know how Florus searched for me to make me offer incense, and God did not deliver me into his hands, my brother ; but since God has pardoned me, so do you too leave me to God.

Secundus—What, then, are we to do about the Martyrs ? They have been crowned because they did not 'betray'.

Donatus—Send me to God. Before Him I will render my account.

Secundus—Come to one side. [To Marinus.] It is alleged that you too were guilty of Betrayal.

Marinus—I did give papers to Pollus. My codices [Gospel manuscripts] are safe.

Secundus—Stand on one side. [To Donatus of Calama.] It is alleged that you were guilty of Betrayal.

Donatus—I gave them medical treatises.

Secundus—Stand on one side. [To Victor.] It is alleged that you 'betrayed' four Gospels.

Victor—Valentianus was Curator. He forced me to throw them into the fire. I knew that they were obliterated [i.e. unusable texts]. Pardon me this fault, and God will also pardon me.

Secundus—Stand on one side. [To Purpurius.] It is alleged that you killed at Milevis the two sons of your sister.

Purpurius—Do you think that I am frightened of you, like the rest? What have you done, who were forced by the Curator and the soldiers to give up the Scriptures? How did you come to be set free by them, unless you surrendered something, or ordered it to be surrendered? For they did not let you go at random. Yes, I did kill, and I intend now to kill those who act against me. So do not now provoke me to say anything more. You know that I interfere with nobody's affairs.

Secundus's Nephew [to Secundus]. Do you hear what he is saying against you? He is ready to leave, and make a schism; and not only he, but also all those who are accused by you. I know that they intend to abandon you, and pronounce sentence against you. You will then remain alone, a heretic. So what business is it of yours what any one has done? He has to render an account to God.

Secundus [to three other bishops]—What do you think?

Bishops—They have God, to whom they must render their account.

Secundus—You know, and God knows. Sit down.

All—Thanks be to God!

The council then proceeded to elect Silvanus, who had himself been a Betrayer, as the new Bishop of Cirta. He remained bishop till 320, when he was tried before Zenophilus on the instructions of the Emperor Constantine, proved guilty of Betrayal, theft and simony, deposed and exiled.

—Augustine, *Against Cresconius* 3:30 (Vassal-Philips, *St Optatus*, pp. 417-419—S.*).

E. THE CARE AND OVERSIGHT OF THE CHURCH

1. THE ORDAINED MINISTRY

While it is clear that a 'charismatic ministry' of Apostles, Prophets, and others endowed with gifts of the Holy Spirit played an important part in the spread and upbuilding of the Church in New Testament times, and is recognised in the *Didache* as playing an important part in the life of the Church about 100 (see 50); it is also clear that from the beginning the Apostles made arrangements for a settled, ordained ministry among congregations of converts (see e.g. Acts 14 : 23, Philippians 1 : 1, Titus 1 : 5-9).

Clement of Rome on the Ordained Ministry, c. 96

195 The Apostles received the Gospel for our sakes from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus the Christ was sent from God. Christ therefore is from God, and the Apostles are from Christ. Both came to pass regularly by the will of God. So when they had received their orders and had been filled with confidence by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and confirmed in faith by the word of God, they went out in the confidence of the Holy Spirit, preaching the Gospel . . . So, preaching in country and city, they appointed their firstfruits [first converts], having tested them by the Spirit, to be bishops and deacons of those who should believe . . .

Our Apostles also knew through our Lord Jesus Christ that there would be strife over the name of the bishop's office. So for this reason, since they had perfect foreknowledge, they appointed the persons already mentioned, and subsequently gave them permanence,¹ so that, if they² should fall asleep, other approved men should succeed to their ministry . . . It will be no small sin on our part, if we depose from the episcopal office those who have been blameless, and piously offered the gifts.³ Blessed are the presbyters⁴ who have gone before in the way, who came to a fruitful and perfect end; for they need have no fear that anyone will depose them from their appointed place. [But]

¹ Another possible translation is 'a supplement', like the codicil of a will.

² 'They' may either mean 'the Apostles' or 'the persons already mentioned.'

³ i.e. have presided at the Eucharist. See 129, 135.

⁴ It is clear that in this passage the terms 'bishop' and 'presbyter' refer to the same office, as in Acts 20 : 17 and 28 and Titus 1 : 5 and 7.

you have in fact removed certain men of good behaviour from a ministry blamelessly and honourably fulfilled.

—*I Clement* 42 : 1-4 and 44 : 1-2, 4-6 (Lowther Clarke—S.*).

Bishops and Deacons in the Didache, c. 100

The *Didache* envisaged an ordained and a charismatic ministry working side by side.

- 196 Elect . . . for yourselves bishops and deacons worthy of the Lord, men meek and not covetous, and true and approved : for they also minister unto you the ministry of the prophets and teachers. Therefore despise them not : for these are they which are honoured of you with the prophets and teachers.

—*Didache* 15 : 1-2 (Bigg—S.).

The Ministry and Sacraments in Ignatius, c. 115

- 197 Avoid divisions, as the beginning of evil. Follow, all of you, the bishop, as Jesus Christ followed the Father ; and follow the presbytery¹ as the Apostles. Moreover, reverence the deacons as the commandment of God. Let no man do anything pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that eucharist be considered valid which is under the bishop or him to whom he commits it. Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as wherever Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. Apart from the bishop it is not lawful either to baptise or to hold a love-feast.² But whatever he approves is also well-pleasing to God, that everything which you do may be secure and valid.

—Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans* 8 (Strawley*).

¹ It is not clear whether this refers to the presbyters as a class, or to the collective authority of a board of presbyters.

² For the Love-Feast see 152.

Jerome on the Introduction of Presiding Bishops

- 198 Before factions were introduced into religion by the prompting of the devil [churches were governed by a council of presbyters], but as soon as each man began to consider those

whom he had baptised to belong to himself and not to Christ, it was decided throughout the world that one elected from among the presbyters should be placed over the rest, so that the care of the church should devolve on him, and the seeds of schism be removed.

—Jerome, *On Titus* 1 : 5 (Lightfoot, *Philippians* p. 206*).

It is not possible to say whether Jerome, writing nearly 300 years after Ignatius, is basing his statement on reliable tradition or not. In another place, *Epistles* 146, Jerome states that 'the Apostle plainly teaches that presbyters and bishops are the same', but that in Alexandria 'the presbyters used to appoint as bishop one chosen from their number.' He mentions early Third Century bishops of Alexandria by name, and it is possible he is using Origen as his authority.

The Right of Laymen to Preach, c. 215

Origen, while as yet a layman, had been allowed to give public lectures on biblical exegesis in Caesarea. His Bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria, criticised this. Eusebius quotes the letter written in defence of the practice by the Bishops of Jerusalem and Caesarea.

199 [Demetrius] included in his letter a statement that it was an unheard-of, unprecedented thing that where bishops were present laymen should preach—a statement which is glaringly untrue. In cases where persons are found duly qualified to assist the clergy, they are called on by the holy bishops to preach to the laity. [Three contemporary examples are given, all from Asia Minor.] Probably there are other places where this happens, unknown to us.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 6 : 19. 12 (W.).

Office in the Church, c. 248

200 We call upon those who are competent to take office, who are sound in doctrine and life, to rule over the churches. We do not accept those who love power. But we put pressure on those who on account of their great humility are reluctant hastily to take upon themselves the common responsibility of the Church of God. And those who rule us well are those who have had to be forced to take office, being constrained by the great King, who, we are convinced, is the Son of God, the Divine Word.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 8 : 75 (C.*).

Office in the Church at Edessa, c. 250

- 201 The Apostles appointed, That there should be presbyters and deacons like the priests and Levites, and subdeacons like those who carried the vessels of the hall of the sanctuary of the Lord, and an Overseer [Bishop]—the same is the Guide of all the people, like Aaron the Chief and Master of all the priests and Levites.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 5 (Cureton, A.S.D.).

The Right of Laymen to Preach, c. 215

Ordinarily, while as yet a layman, had been allowed to give public lectures on biblical subjects in Caesarea. His Bishop, Demetrius of Alexandria, criticised this. He wrote under the latter written in defence of the practice by the Bishop of Jerusalem and Caesarea.

(The [?] mentioned) included in his letter a statement that it was an unwholesome, unprecedented thing that where bishops were present laymen should preach—a statement which is glaringly untrue. In cases where persons are found duly qualified to assist the clergy, they are called on by the holy bishops to preach to the laity. [Three contemporary examples are given, all from Asia Minor]. Probably there are other places where this happens, unknown to us.

—*Epistola Basilidiana* (Barnes, 1891, p. 12).

Office in the Church, c. 248

200 We call upon those who are competent to take office, who are sound in doctrine and life, to take over the churches. We do not accept those who have power. But we put pressure on those who on account of their great humility are reluctant hastily to take upon themselves the common responsibility of the Church of God. And those who rule as well as those who have had to be forced to take office, being constrained by the great King, who, we are convinced, is the Son of God, the Divine Word.

—*Origen, Epistola* 1: 25 (C.S.).

2. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

Episcopal Hierarchy

By the end of the Third Century a clear pattern of episcopal hierarchy is emerging both in the Roman and Persian Empires, though it is by no means uniform or universal. The general pattern is that bishops come to be in charge of cities with several congregations, or districts with several towns; some bishops, again, come to have authority over a wider area; while some, again, are recognised as holders of Great Sees, and come to have Patriarchal status. It is convenient to speak of

a Bishop	and his Diocese
a Metropolitan	and his Province
a Patriarch	and his Patriarchate.

In the West, the Patriarch of Rome came to be known as the Pope. In the Persian Empire, the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was often called the Catholicos. In the West, a Metropolitan was often called an Archbishop.

The Authority of a Bishop in his own Diocese, 256

202 No one of us sets himself up as a Bishop of Bishops, or by tyrannical terror forces his colleagues to a necessity of obeying; inasmuch as every bishop in the free use of his liberty and power, has the right of forming his own judgment, and can no more be judged by another than he can himself judge another. But we must all await the judgment of our Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the power both of setting us in the government of His Church, and of judging our acts in it.

—Cyprian, *Statement at the Seventh Council of Carthage* (L.F.*).

The Collegiate Authority of the Episcopate and the Pope, 251

In an important statement in his work *On Unity*, Cyprian speaks of the authority of the bishops acting together (the collegiate episcopate) and its relation to the authority of the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter. There are two separate versions of this statement: both may be genuine, expressing Cyprian's point of view at different times, but if so, it is not agreed which was written first.

First Version

- 203 a.** Christ, then, builds the Church upon Peter and says to him: 'Feed my sheep.' [Matthew 16:18 and John 21:15-17.] Though He grants equal power to all the Apostles, he established among them only one presidential chair. This was his authoritative provision of the source and principle of unity. What Peter was the other apostles also were; but Peter has the primacy, and the unity of the Church and that of his presidential authority clearly go together. All the Apostles are shepherds; but their flock is shown to be a single one if they are in full agreement with each other as they tend it. Can the man who does not hold with this unity based on Peter believe that he holds the faith?

Second Version

- b.** He builds the Church, then, upon one man. It is true that after His resurrection He grants equal power to all the Apostles . . . But to show the nature of unity He authoritatively provided a source for it in one person. What Peter was the other Apostles also were—endowed with an equal share of honour and power. But at the outset a beginning is made with a single appointment to show that the Church of Christ is one . . . Can anyone then who does not hold with this unity of the Church believe that he holds the faith? . . . Can anyone then who opposes and rebels against the Church presume that he belongs to it?

Now above all we bishops who preside in the Church must adhere firmly to this unity and defend it, to demonstrate that the authority of bishops itself is one and undivided.

Both Versions

- c.** Episcopal authority is a unity, and each bishop has tenure of office by it collectively with the whole episcopate.¹

—Cyprian, *On Unity* 4-5 (Garrett).

¹ Literally: 'The episcopate is one, of which each bishop holds a part collectively.'

The Great Councils

Important decisions on matters of doctrine and church discipline were in fact taken by the four great Councils of the Church, at Nicaea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) in which the majority of participants were bishops.

See **259-284**. These were accepted by the Church in the West, and the Greek Church. The decisions of all but Ephesus were accepted by the Persian Church; and the decisions of all but Chalcedon by the Armenian and Monophysite Churches.

Other Councils—whether in the West, in Constantinople, or in the Persian Empire—were held later, but their decisions were only accepted as binding in limited areas.

The Great Sees, as defined at Nicaea, 325

- 204** Let the ancient customs hold good which are in Egypt and Libya and Pentapolis [Cyrenaica], according to which the Bishop of Alexandria has authority over all these places.

For this also is customary to the Bishop of Rome.

In like manner in Antioch and in the other provinces, the privileges are to be preserved to the Churches. But this is clearly to be understood, that, if anyone be made a bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan,¹ the Great Synod [Council of Nicaea] declares that he shall not be a bishop . . .

Since custom and ancient tradition has held good, that the Bishop of Aelia [Jerusalem] be honoured, let him have his proper honour, saying to the Metropolis [Caesarea] the honour peculiar to it.

—*Council of Nicaea*, Canons 6 and 7 (Hammond—S.).

¹ i.e. the Bishop of Antioch.

The four great Sees—Rome, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, came to have Patriarchal status. (For the Patriarchate of the East, at Seleucia-Ctesiphon, see **383, 384, 403-404**). Meanwhile, with the new capital city of Constantinople, an important See was established there.

The Status of the Patriarch of Constantinople

At the Council of Constantinople, 381

- 205** The Bishop of Constantinople shall have the primacy of honour next after the Bishop of Rome, because that Constantinople is New Rome.

—*Council of Constantinople*, Canon 3 (K. 2).

At the Council of Chalcedon, 451

- 206** Following the judgment of the holy Fathers in all things, and acknowledging the canon of [the Council of Constantinople] which has just been read, we also determine and decree the same things with regard to the privileges of the most holy city of Constantinople, New Rome. For to the throne of Old Rome, the Fathers gave privileges with good reason, because it was the Imperial City. And [the Council of Constantinople], with the same consideration in view, gave equal privileges to the most holy throne of New Rome; judging with good reason that the city honoured by the monarchy and the senate, and enjoying equal privileges with the old imperial Rome, should likewise receive equal rank in matters ecclesiastical, holding the second place after her.

—Council of Chalcedon, Canon 28 (B.).

The Attitude of Pope Leo the Great

It is clear that Pope Leo, while ready to accept that Constantinople came second to Rome, resented the suggestion that secular equality implied ecclesiastical equality. The following is an extract from his letter to the Emperor Marcian, who had sent information about the Council's decision.

- 207** Let the City of Constantinople have, as we desire, its high rank, and under the protection of God's right hand, long enjoy Your Clemency's rule. Yet things secular stand on a different basis from things Divine; and there can be no sure building save on that Rock [Peter] which the Lord has laid for a foundation . . .

Let [the Patriarch of Constantinople] not disdain a city which is royal, though he cannot make it an Apostolic See; and let him on no account hope that he can rise by doing injury to others.

—Leo the Great, *Letter 104* (N. & P.-N.F.).

For the later claims of the Papacy, see also **373**.

A. THE BASIS OF DOCTRINE

1. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

The first Scriptures of the Church were the books of the Old Testament, usually in one of the Greek translations. The Canon of the Old Testament had not yet been fixed, and some books of the Apocrypha were used (see 20, 94). The Gospels and Epistles were widely used in the Second Century, and other books were also read in worship. The full New Testament as we know it was accepted by Athanasius in 360, and by the Western Church at Rome in 382 and Carthage in 397. The Eastern Churches took much longer to accept some of the Catholic Epistles and the Book of Revelation. In the Syriac-speaking Church the Chinese inscription of 521 (see 117) is the first reference to the acceptance of all twenty-seven books of the New Testament.

IV. DOCTRINE

'Accept the New Testament!' c. 115

208 Do nothing from personal rivalry, but from Christ-teaching. For I heard certain men saying: 'Whatever I do not find in the Archives [i.e. the Old Testament] I cannot accept in the Gospel.' And when I said, 'It is written [i.e. That too is Scripture]', they replied, 'That is the question!' For me, the Archives are Jesus Christ. The invaluable Archives are His Cross, and death, and His resurrection, and the faith which is through him.

—Ignatius, *Polish Letters* 8: 2 (*)

Papian, a link with the Apostles, c. 140

Ignatius himself a disciple of Polycarp says that Papian 'had listened to John and was later a companion of Polycarp'. Besides in the following passage quotes Papian's own account of the Apostolic teaching, and the writing of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

209 'Whenever anyone came who had been a follower of the Elders, I enquired into the words of the Elders—what

* Here the word seems to be a technical term for the Apostles and those who had personally been disciples of Jesus. Compare 1 John 1.

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—Ignatius, *Philadelphians* 8 : 2 (*).

Papias, a Link with the Apostles, c. 140

Irenaeus, himself a disciple of Polycarp, says that Papias ‘had listened to John and was later a companion of Polycarp’. Eusebius in the following passage quotes Papias’s own account of the Apostolic teaching, and the writing of the Gospels of Mark and Matthew.

- 209 Whenever anyone came who had been a follower of the Elders,¹ I enquired into the words of the Elders—what

¹ Here the word seems to be a technical term for the Apostles and those who had personally been Disciples of Jesus. Compare 2 John 1.

Andrew or Peter had said, or Philip or Thomas or James or John or Matthew, or any other Disciple of the Lord; and what Aristion and the Elder John, Disciples of the Lord, were still saying.² For I did not imagine that things out of books would help me as much as the utterances of a 'living and abiding' [I Peter 1 : 23] voice.

Eusebius next refers to, without quoting, accounts of the Lord's sayings which Papias had learned. He then resumes his direct quotation.

This, too, the Elder used to say :

'Mark, who had been Peter's interpreter,³ wrote down carefully, but not in order, all that he remembered of the Lord's sayings and doings. For he did not hear Christ, nor followed Him, but later, as I said, was one of Peter's followers. Peter used to adapt his teaching to the occasion, not as giving a systematic compilation of the Lord's Sayings, so that Mark was quite right in writing down some things just as he remembered them. For he had one purpose only—to leave out nothing that he had heard, and to make no mis-statement about it . . .'

Matthew compiled the 'Sayings'⁴ in the Aramaic language, and everyone translated them as well as he could.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3 : 39 (*).

² John is mentioned twice, first along with Disciples now dead, then with the living—possibly because he lived to an old age. Eusebius thinks there may have been two Johns.

³ Papias probably means that Mark, who uses some Latin terms in his Gospel, translated Peter's messages into Latin when he was in Rome.

⁴ Either a collection of Sayings of Christ, or Old Testament prophecies about Christ. The former meaning suits the context better. For the tradition that Matthew wrote in Aramaic, compare 34 and 210.

Irenaeus on the Gospels, c. 190

As a boy, Irenaeus had listened to Polycarp (see 128), and it was doubtless from him that he obtained the following information. He is quoted by Eusebius.

210 Matthew published a written Gospel for the Hebrews in their own tongue, while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the Church there. After, their passing, Mark also, the disciple and interpreter of Peter

transmitted to us in writing the things preached by Peter. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by him. Lastly John, the Disciple of the Lord, who had leant back on His breast [John 21 : 20], once more set forth the Gospel, while residing at Ephesus in Asia.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5 : 8 (W.).

The Scriptures acknowledged by the Church at Rome, c. 190

The following statement, whose writer is unknown, is contemporary with Irenaeus's writings, and is the earliest extant statement of the New Testament Canon. It is a fragment, discovered in 1740, and begins with the end of a reference to Mark.

211 . . . but at some he was present, and so he set them down.

The Third Book of the Gospel, that according to Luke, was compiled in his own name on Paul's authority by Luke the physician, when after Christ's ascension Paul had taken him to be with him like a legal expert. Yet neither did *he*¹ see the Lord in the flesh ; and he too, as he was able to ascertain events, begins his story from the birth of John.

The Fourth of the Gospels was written by John, one of the disciples . . . It was revealed to Andrew, one of the Apostles, that John was to write all things in his own name, and they were all to certify.

And therefore, though various ideas are taught in the several Books of the Gospels, yet it makes no difference to the faith of believers, since by one sovereign Spirit all things are declared in them concerning the Nativity, the Passion, the Resurrection, the conversation with His Disciples, and the two Comings—the first in lowliness and contempt, which has come to pass ; the second glorious with royal power, which is to come . . .

The Acts, however, of all the Apostles are written in one Book. Luke, 'to the most excellent Theophilus', includes events because they were done in his own presence, as he also plainly shows by leaving out the passion of Peter, and

¹ Probably Luke is here compared with Mark.

also the departure of Paul from the City² on his journey to Spain [Romans 15 : 28].

The Epistles, however, of Paul themselves make plain to those who wish to understand it, what Epistles were sent by him, and from what place or for what reason. He wrote at some length first of all to the Corinthians, forbidding the schisms of heresy; next to the Galatians, forbidding circumcision; then he wrote to the Romans at greater length, impressing on them the rule of the Scriptures, and also that Christ is the first principle of them . . .

The blessed Apostle Paul himself, following the rule of his predecessor³ John, writes only by name to Seven Churches [compare Revelation 1 : 4], in the following order—to the Corinthians a first, to the Ephesians a second, to the Philippians a third, to the Colossians a fourth, to the Galatians a fifth, to the Thessalonians a sixth, to the Romans a seventh—although for the sake of admonition there is a second to the Corinthians and to the Thessalonians, yet *one* Church is recognised as being spread over the entire world. For John too in the Apocalypse, though he writes to Seven Churches, yet speaks to all. However one [letter] to Philemon, one to Titus, and two to Timothy were put in writing from personal inclination and attachment, to be in honour however for the Catholic Church for the ordering of ecclesiastical discipline.

Several other letters, said to be by Paul, are forgeries, and cannot be accepted.

The Epistle of Jude no doubt, and the couple bearing the name of John,⁴ are accepted in the Catholic Church; and the Wisdom written by the friends of Solomon in his honour.⁵ The Apocalypse of John, and of Peter only we receive . . .⁶ which some of our friends will not have read in Church.

² i.e. Rome. This, the fact that the *Muratorian Fragment* is written in Latin, and the reference to Hermas, make it clear that it comes from Rome.

³ John was one of the Twelve, and therefore an Apostle before Paul. In point of fact Revelation was later than Paul's letters.

⁴ Probably I and II John.

⁵ Wisdom of Solomon. See 94. It is strange to find this classed with the New Testament.

⁶ Words here seem to have been missed out, though there is no gap in the MS. It may have read: 'we receive one Epistle; there is also a Second, which some of our friends will not have read . . .'

But the Shepherd⁷ was written quite lately in our times in the City of Rome by Hermas ; . . . it ought indeed to be read, but it cannot to the end of time be publicly read in the Church to the people, either among the Prophets, who are complete in number, or among the Apostles.⁸

Various Gnostic, Marcionite and Montanist writings are to be rejected.

—*The Muratorian Fragment* (Gwatkin—S.*)

⁷ The Shepherd of Hermas. See 153, 213, 214.

⁸ Compare Justin's reference to the 'Memoirs of the Apostles' in 132.

The Scriptures acknowledged by the Church at Edessa, c. 250

212 The Apostles appointed that, except the Old Testament and the Prophets and the Gospel, and the Acts of their own Triumphs, let not anything be read in the pulpit of the Church¹ . . .

After the death of the Apostles there were Guides and Rulers in the Churches, and whatever the Apostles had committed to them, and they had received from them, they taught to the multitude all the time of their lives. They again, at their deaths also committed and delivered to their disciples after them everything which they had received from the Apostles ; also what James had written from Jerusalem, and Simon from the city of Rome, and John from Ephesus, and Mark from the great Alexandria, and Andrew from Phrygia, and Luke from Macedonia, and Judas Thomas from India ; that the Epistles of an Apostle might be received and read in the churches in every place—as those Triumphs of their Acts, which Luke wrote, are read—that by this the Apostles might be known, and the Prophets and the Old Testament and the New, that one truth was preached by them all, that one Spirit spoke in them all from one God, whom they had all worshipped and had all preached.

—*Doctrine of the Apostles*, Canon 10 and Conclusion (Cureton, *A.S.D.**).

¹ For the reading of the Gospel, see also 141.

It is not clear whether the Epistles of Mark, Andrew, Luke and Thomas here referred to are genuine letters now lost, or apocryphal letters later rejected by the Church.

The Scriptures acknowledged by the Church at Caesarea, c. 325

Eusebius the historian was Bishop of Caesarea from 314 till his death in 339 or 340.

- 213 The first of the 'General' Epistles [is attributed to James]. Admittedly its authenticity is doubted, since few early writers refer to it, any more than to 'Jude's' . . . But the fact remains that these two . . . have been regularly used in very many churches. (2 : 23)

Of Peter one Epistle, known as the First, is accepted, and this the Early Fathers quoted freely, as undoubtedly genuine. But the Second Petrine Epistle we have been taught to regard as uncanonical; many, however, have thought it valuable, and have honoured it with a place among the other Scriptures. [Other books connected with the name of Peter are clearly not genuine.] Paul, on the other hand, was obviously and unmistakably the author of the Fourteen Epistles, but we must not shut our eyes to the fact that some authorities have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, pointing out that the Roman Church denies that it is the work of Paul. [The 'Acts of Paul' are not genuine.] As the same Apostle, in the salutations that conclude the Epistle to the Romans, has referred among others to Hermas, the reputed author of the 'Shepherd'¹, it is to be noted that this, too, has been rejected by some authorities and therefore cannot be placed among the accepted books. Others, however, have judged it indispensable . . . We know that it has been used before now in public worship. (3 : 3)

Clement has left us with one recognised Epistle, long and wonderful, which he composed in the name of the Church at Rome and sent to the Church at Corinth² . . . I have evidence that in many churches this Epistle was read aloud to the assembled worshippers in early days, as it is in our own. (3 : 16)

It will be well, at this point, to classify the New Testament writings already referred to. We must, of course, put first the Holy Quartet of the Gospels, followed by the Acts of the Apostles. The next place in the list goes to Paul's Epistles, and after them we must recognise the Epistle

¹ See 211 Note 7.

² I Clement. See 195.

called I John ; likewise I Peter. To these may be added, if it is thought proper, the Revelation of John . . . These are classed as Recognised Books.

Those that are disputed, yet familiar to most, include the Epistles known as James, Jude and II Peter, and those called II and III John, the work either of the Evangelist or of someone else with the same name.³

A third class of books is spurious, and some would include in this class the Book of Revelation. (3 : 25)

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, passages as noted (W.).

³ See 209 Note 2.

Athanasius on the Canonical Scriptures, 369

Athanasius begins by giving a list of Old Testament books. This is identical with our present-day Old Testament, except that Esther is omitted, and Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah (see 88) are included. Then he goes on to speak of the New Testament.

214 There are Four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Afterwards come the Acts of the Apostles and the so-called Catholic Epistles, seven in number : one of James, two of Peter, three of John, and after these one of Jude. In addition there are fourteen Epistles of Paul written in this order : the first to the Romans ; then two to the Corinthians ; after these, to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians ; two to the Thessalonians ; to the Hebrews ; two to Timothy ; one to Titus ; and lastly, that to Philemon. In addition, there is the Revelation of John.

These are the fountains of salvation, that those who thirst may be satisfied with the living words they contain. In these alone is proclaimed the doctrine of godliness. Let no man add to these, neither let him take anything away from these.

There are other books besides these, not included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us, and who wish for instruction in the word of godliness.

These include Esther, several Old Testament Apocrypha books, like Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus, the Shepherd of

Hermas, and 'The Teaching of the Apostles', which may mean the Didache.

—Athanasius, *Festal Epistle* 39 : 5-7 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

As already noted, the Western Church accepted the above Canon of the New Testament before the end of the Fourth Century. The Greek Church was slower in accepting some of the Catholic Epistles. John Chrysostom and his friend and contemporary Theodore of Mopsuestia (see 226) omit II Peter, II and III John and Jude. The Syriac-speaking Church in the east was the slowest of all to adopt the full Canon. The 'non-Chalcedonian' Philoxenus of Mabbog, however, included the full canon in the 'Philoxene' Syriac Translation, prepared for his use in 508. (For Philoxenus see also 300).

The Canon of the New Testament in the East

Cosmas, *The India-Sailor*, c. 547

Cosmas (see 5, 30) was probably a Nestorian. While it suits the purpose of his own arguments to deny the canonicity of the Catholic Epistles, he clearly could count on contemporary support for the view.

215 The Church from the first has held the Catholic Epistles to be doubtful . . . Most of the authorities deny that these Epistles were written by the Apostles, but assign them to some other authors—simple presbyters. [Some authorities say] that with the exception of I Peter and I John, the General Epistles were not written by the Apostles, while others say they were all written by presbyters, and not by the Apostles. For I, II and III John are so written that it is evident that the three are the productions of a single person. But others accept also the Epistle of James along with [I John and I Peter], while others accept them all.

Among the Syrians, however, none are found except only the three already mentioned—James, I Peter and I John—while the others do not even find a place among them.

—Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*, from Book 7 (McC.*).

Junilius, c. 553

Junilius, a government official of Constantinople, sets down, in a letter to the African Bishop Primasius, the gist of what was taught at the Persian School of Theology in Nisibin. It is put in dialogue form.

216 *Pupil*—In what books is the Divine History contained?

Teacher—In [the Old Testament Historical Books, and in] Matthew, Mark, Luke, John and the Acts of the Apostles.

Pupil—In what books is prophecy included?

Teacher—[In the Old Testament Prophets]. Besides this, as to the Apocalypse of John, there is considerable doubt among the Eastern Christians . . .

Pupil—What books pertain to pure doctrine?

Teacher—[Besides some Old Testament Wisdom Books, there are] the Epistles of Paul the Apostle—one to Romans, two to Corinthians, one to Galatians, one to Ephesians, one to Philippians, one to Colossians, two to Thessalonians, two to Timothy, one to Titus, one to Philemon, one to Hebrews—the blessed Peter to the Peoples, and the blessed John's First Epistle.

Pupil—Do no other books pertain to pure doctrine?

Teacher—Very many add five others, which are called the Canonical Letters of the Apostles, that is, James, II Peter, Jude, II and III John.

—Junilius—*Letter to Bishop Primasius*, 3, 4, 6 and 7 (Latin in Westcott, *Canon of the New Testament*, pp. 485-486. Y.).

The Chinese Monument, 781

The following description of the life and habits of Christian monks in China shows that before that date the full New Testament as we know it had been accepted in the East as canonical.

217 Of Scriptures there were left twenty-seven books which explain the great reformation to unlock the barriers of understanding. The water and the Spirit of religious Baptism wash away vain glory and cleanse one pure and white. The figure of ten¹ which is held as a seal lightens the four quarters

¹ In Chinese writing the figure of ten is an exact Cross.

to unite all without exception. The wood struck² awakes a sound of pity and kindness ; the worship eastward hastens men along the road of life and glory. They keep the beard, because they maintain outward relationships ; they shave the crown, because they have no inward passions. They do not keep male or female slaves, reckoning honourable and mean among men alike ; they do not amass goods and wealth, displaying devotion and generosity among themselves. Purification is made perfect by seclusion and meditation ; self-restraint grows strong by silence and watching. At the seven hours there is ritual praise, greatly helping the living and the dead ; in seven days there is one Offering,³ washing the heart to restore purity.

—*Christian Monument at Ch'ang-An*, lines 56-73 (Moule, C.C.).

² The board struck to summon the monks to worship. Compare 423.

³ The Eucharist.

The Translation of Scripture

During the first seven centuries the Scriptures, in whole or in part, were translated into Syriac, Latin, Gothic, Coptic (Egyptian), Ethiopic, Armenian, Georgian and (in the case of the Diatessaron) Arabic. Translations into Chinese (see 33) and the Hunnic languages (see 39) are not extant today. For references to early translation work, see 10, 29, 38, 182, 214 (footnote), 219.

The Wonder of the Gospel and its Translation

218 How wondrous, too, must that power be deemed which summoned obscure and uneducated men from their fisher's trade, and made them the legislators and instructors of the human race ! And how clear a demonstration of [Christ's] Deity do we find in the promise so well performed, that He would make them fishers of men [Mark 1 : 17], in the power and energy which He bestowed, so that they composed and published writings of such authority that they were translated into every civilised and barbarous language, were read and pondered by all nations, and the doctrines contained in them accredited as the oracles of God !

—Eusebius, *Oration 17* : 9 (G.E.H.).

The Preparation of the Vulgate

The 'Old Latin' translation was inaccurate, and its language was despised by educated men. (See 84) Jerome, c. 340-420, was asked by Pope Damasus to revise it. He did so, and produced the Vulgate ('Translation in the Common Tongue'), which was soon accepted as the Bible of the Western Church. The following passage is from Jerome's preface to the first part of his translation, the Four Gospels, completed in 383.

- 219 You urge me to revise the Old Latin version and, as it were, to sit in judgment on the copies of the Scriptures which are now scattered throughout the whole world; and, since they differ from one another, you would have me decide which of them agree with the Greek original. The labour is one of love, but at the same time both dangerous and presumptuous; for when I judge other people, I must be content to be judged by all.

They will say I have altered the text of Scriptures. I am consoled that I am doing it on your instructions, who are Supreme Bishop.

Even on the showing of those who revile us, readings at variance with the early copies cannot be right. . . . Why not go back to the original Greek and correct the mistakes introduced by inaccurate translators, . . . and all that has been inserted or changed by copyists who were more asleep than awake? . . .

I promise, in this short Preface, the Four Gospels only, . . . as they have been revised by the comparison of Greek manuscripts. Only early ones have been used. But . . . I have used my pen with some restraint. I have corrected only passages which seemed to convey a different meaning [from the Greek]. I have allowed the rest to remain as they are.

—Jerome, *Preface to the Four Gospels* (N. & P.-N.F.*).

Origen, the First Great Bible Scholar, c. 185-254

Textual Criticism

- 220 So meticulous was the scrutiny to which Origen subjected the Scriptural Books that he even mastered the Hebrew language, and secured for himself a copy, in the actual

Hebrew script, of the original documents circulating among the Jews. Moreover, he hunted out the published translations of Holy Writ other than the Septuagint, and in addition to the Versions in common use—those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion¹—he discovered several alternative translations. These had been lost for many years—I don't know where—but he hunted them out of their hiding-places and brought them to light. These were wrapped in mystery, and he had no idea who wrote them: the only thing he could say was that he had found one at Nicopolis near Actium [in Greece], and the other at some similar place. Anyway, in his 'Sixfold Edition' of the Psalms, after the four familiar Versions, he placed in parallel columns not only a fifth but a sixth and seventh translation; in the case of one, he has added a note that it was found at Jericho in a jar during the reign of Antoninus [Caracalla, 211-217], the son of Severus. All these he combined in one volume, breaking them up into clauses and setting them side by side in parallel columns, along with the original Hebrew text. Thus he has left us copies of the 'Sixfold Edition', as it is called. In a separate publication he put the Versions of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion alongside the Septuagint, in his 'Fourfold Edition'.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6: 16 (W.).

¹ Three translations of the Old Testament in Greek, made in the Second Century A.D.

'Higher' Criticism

Eusebius quotes Origen's views on the authorship of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

221 In the Epistle entitled 'To the Hebrews' the diction does not exhibit the characteristic roughness of speech or phraseology admitted by the Apostle [Paul] himself [II Corinthians 11: 6]; the construction of sentences is closer to Greek usage, as anyone capable of recognising differences of style would agree. On the other hand, the matter of the Epistle is wonderful, and quite equal to the Apostle's acknowledged writings: the truth of this would be admitted by anyone who has read the Apostle carefully...

If I were asked my personal opinion, I would say that the matter is the Apostle's, but the phraseology and construc-

tion are those of someone who remembered the Apostle's teaching, and wrote his own interpretation of what his master had said. So if any church regards this Epistle as Paul's, it should be commended for so doing, for the Primitive Church had every justification for handing it down as his. Who wrote the Epistle is known to God alone: the accounts that have reached us suggest that it was either Clement, who became Bishop of Rome,¹ or Luke, who wrote the Gospel and the Acts.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6 : 25 (W.).

¹ The writer of I Clement (see 195).

Interpretation

222 The right way, . . . as it appears to us, of approaching the Scriptures and gathering their meaning, is the following . . . One must . . . record the meaning of the Sacred Writings in a threefold way upon one's soul, so that the simple man may be edified by what we may call the *flesh* of Scripture, this name being given to the obvious interpretation; while the man who has made some progress may be edified by its *soul*, as it were; and the man who is perfect, and like those mentioned by the Apostle [in I Corinthians 2 : 6-7], may be edified by the *spiritual* law . . . For just as man consists of body, soul and spirit, so in the same way does the Scripture, which has been prepared by God to be given for man's salvation.

—Origen, *On First Principles* 4 : 2. 4 (Butterworth—S.).

223 Now what man of intelligence will believe that the First and the Second and the Third Day, and the 'evening and the morning' [Genesis 1 : 5, 8 and 13] existed without the sun and moon and stars? And that the First Day, if we may so call it, was even without a heaven? . . . I do not think that anyone will doubt that these are figurative expressions which indicate certain mysteries through a semblance of history and not through actual events . . .

Even the Gospels are full of passages of this kind, as when the Devil takes Jesus up into a 'high mountain' in order to show him from thence 'the kingdoms of the whole world and the glory of them' [Matthew 4 : 8]. For what man who

does not read such passages carelessly would fail to condemn those who believe that with the eye of flesh, which requires a great height to enable us to perceive what is below and at our feet, the kingdoms of the Persians, Scythians, Indians and Parthians were seen, and the manner in which their rulers are glorified by men? And the careful reader will detect thousands of other passages like this in the Gospels, which will convince him that events which did not take place at all are woven into the records of what literally did happen.

—Origin, *On First Principles* 4 : 3. 1 (Butterworth)

224 These arguments are designed to show that we do less than justice to that Divine Power which gave us the Sacred Writings if we interpret them merely according to the letter, for, as we have seen, we shall now and then come across passages which, taken literally, say what is untrue, or absurd, or impossible. We have further shown that frequently historic narrative and valuable precept are interwoven. But I hope nobody will think that . . . I am saying that no biblical history is trustworthy, or that . . . no scriptural precept is worth our attention. I should not dream of saying that what eye-witnesses have written about our Saviour is false, or that none of His teaching is to be attended to. No—on the contrary, we must say that in many matters the Sacred Writings speak the plain historic truth.

Examples are the place of Abraham's burial and Joseph's inheritance; the building of Solomon's Temple at Jerusalem.

Indeed, those places where plain historic truth is recorded are more numerous than those whose force lies rather in the underlying spiritual message.

Similarly, no one will doubt that the Ten Commandments and those of the Gospel are meant to be taken literally.

None the less, the man of careful mind will . . . do well to recall our Lord's words, 'Search the Scriptures' [John 5 : 39], and carefully examine where the literal meaning is the true meaning, and where it cannot be. He must investigate, so far as he can, the 'Mind of Scripture', that is, the principle of all Scripture, when he encounters a saying

that cannot be taken literally. Then he will find that, although the series of words under review yields an impossible sense, the leading thought is not only not impossible, but positively true. He must strive to apprehend the whole meaning, carefully comparing the difficult passage with other passages where the same expression leaves us with a possible and true sense, and he will find that these other passages join their force with the one that seemed to be impossible, to yield a spiritual sense.

—Origen, *On First Principles* 4 : 20-21 (Routley, *The Wisdom of the Fathers*, pp. 18-20).

A good example of Origen's allegorical method of interpretation will be found in 1. The following is typical of Origen's method with a really difficult verse.

225 It is in this [allegorical] sense also that the righteous destroy everything remaining alive of the enemies which originate from evil... Thus also we understand the saying [in Psalm 137 : 8-9] which reads as follows : ' O daughter of Babylon . . . blessed is he who shall take hold of thy infants and dash them against the rock.' The infants of Babylon, which means ' confusion ', are confused thoughts caused by evil which have just been implanted and are growing up in the soul. The man who takes hold of them, so that he breaks their heads by the firmness and solidity of the Word, is dashing the infants of Babylon against the rock ; and on this account he becomes blessed. Supposing, then, that God does command men to kill the works of iniquity, ' children and all ', and ' to slaughter their entire race ' ¹, His teaching in no way contradicts the proclamation of Jesus.

—Origen, *Against Celsus* 7 : 22 (C.).

¹ The quotations are from Celsus's objection, based on such verses as Deuteronomy 7 : 2, that the harsh commands of the God of the Old Testament were inconsistent with the love and forgiveness proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Opponent of Allegory, c. 350-428

Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia from 392 to 428, was a determined opponent of the allegorical method of biblical interpretation. As he was looked upon by the Persian Church as

'The Interpreter', and all his works were translated into Syriac, his point of view had an important influence in the Church of the East.

The following is from his Commentary on Galatians, where he is dealing with Paul's statement: 'Which things are said as an allegory' (4:24). Such a passage is no excuse for those who would allegorise the plain meaning of Scripture.

- 226 For the Apostle does not do away with the history, nor does he speak of things done just recently; but he presents those things [the story of Abraham's two wives] just as they had happened at that time. To get across his meaning he has made use of the history of things that have actually happened, . . . for when he says 'As' [in verse 29] he is of course making a comparison, but a comparison would be impossible if the things compared did not actually exist . . . This, therefore, is the reason why he has stated clearly: 'Which things are said as an allegory'. By 'allegory' he means a comparison made by putting side by side things that have already taken place, and present circumstances.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On Galatians* 4:24 (Latin and Greek of part in Swete, *Theodore on Minor Epistles* 1:73-4, 79. Y.).

Examples of Theodore's Exegesis

The following examples of Theodore's literal method of exegesis are taken from his *Commentary on the Gospel of John*:

- 227 [On John 2:1.] It is evident that this 'third day' is computed to refer to the third day after the baptism. For he means the first day to be the one on which Andrew and his companion followed Him and spent the night with Him. The second day is that on which happened what is told of Philip and Nathanael. Finally, the third day is that on which took place the events of the wedding feast. Obviously, all these things happened in Galilee, for right after the baptism He set out for there and stayed there. Moreover, what happened in the contest with the devil, which Matthew relates, evidently took place afterwards; for Matthew is not concerned with the order of events, but simply with relating what happened.

- 228 [On John 7:40-41]. 'Many . . . said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ.' But the

Scripture does not intend to say that the Prophet is one person and the Messiah another¹; but the crowd was ignorantly expecting two men because of the difference of words.

- 229 [On John 12 : 3]. At this point this must be noted, namely, that Matthew says she poured the oil on His head, while John says that she anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. From this it is evident that she did both : she anointed His head and His feet. Moreover, blessed Matthew related this in a cursory fashion, and so he spoke especially of the head. But John, because this had been said [by Matthew], omitted it ; since, moreover, it was a demonstration of love for Christ that she anointed His feet and dried them with her hair, he decided that this was a fitting thing to be related.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Gospel of John*, passages as noted (Greer).

¹ Compare John 1 : 21 and 25. It is interesting to notice this answer, a century and a half before the birth of Muhammad, to an objection frequently made by Muslims today that the Prophet referred to is indeed different from Christ, being Muhammad himself.

For further examples of Theodore's exposition, see 268-272.

For references to the translation of his works into Syriac, see 28, 29, 87.

John Chrysostom, the great Bible Preacher and Expositor, c. 347-407

Chrysostom, who was a personal friend of Theodore of Mopsuestia, did not go quite so far in his opposition to the allegorical methods of Origen, but he rejected all fanciful interpretation, and in his own Commentaries used a literal method which is amazingly modern.

What the Apostle Paul means by 'Allegory'

It is interesting to compare the following remark on Galatians 4 : 24 with Theodore's point of view in 226.

- 230 The Apostle by a conventional use of words calls a type an allegory. His meaning is this : 'Such is the history : it does not only tell us what lies on the surface, but announces to us certain other things, so it is called an allegory.'

—Chrysostom, *On Galatians* 4 : 24 (Chase, *Chrysostom*, p. 58).

When we may Allegorise

In a discussion of the parable of the vineyard in Isaiah 5, Chrysostom lays down guiding rules for interpretation.

- 231 Here we learn an important lesson when and where we may allegorise. We are not irresponsible exponents of the laws on this matter, but may only apply the system of allegorical interpretation when we are following the mind of Scripture. Scripture in this case speaks of a vineyard, a hedge. It does not leave the hearer without responsibility, to attach the words to what person or events he will, but goes on to interpret itself: 'For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel . . .' [Isaiah 5 : 7.]

And this is the universal law of Scripture when it speaks in allegories, that is, to supply the interpretation of the allegory, so that the uncontrolled passion of those who are bent on allegorising may not be left free to wander and penetrate everywhere without system or principle.

—Chrysostom, *On Isaiah 5 : 1-7* (Chase, *Chrysostom*, pp. 60-61).

Examples of Chrysostom's Exposition

The following passage speaks of the whole tone of the Epistle to the Galatians.

- 232 The whole Epistle is full of a vehement and lofty spirit. For if we always addressed our disciples with mildness, even when they needed severity, we would be playing the corrupter and enemy, not the teacher. For this reason our Lord also, who generally spoke gently to His disciples, here and there uses sterner language. At one time he pronounces a blessing; at another a rebuke. For instance, he said to Peter, 'Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona', and promised to lay the foundation of the Church upon his confession; and shortly afterwards He says, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me.' [Matthew 16 : 16-17 and 23] . . . And what awe He inspired in them is clear from John's remark that when the Disciples saw Him conversing with the Samaritan woman, though they reminded Him to take food, no one ventured to say, 'Why talkest thou, or what seekest thou, with her?' [John 4 : 27.]

Taught in this way, and walking in the steps of his Master, Paul has varied his way of speaking according to the needs of

his disciples. At one time he uses knife and cautery ; at another he applies mild remedies. To the Corinthians he says, ' What will ye ? shall I come to you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness ? ' [I Corinthians 4 : 21] but to the Galatians ' O foolish Galatians ! ' [Galatians 3 : 1]. He gives this reproof not once only, but a second time [3 : 3] and near the end he says with a reproachful allusion to them, ' Let no man trouble me ! ' [6 : 17]—then he soothes them again with the words ' My little children, of whom I travail in birth again ' [4 : 19], and in so many other instances.

—Chrysostom, *On Galatians* 1 : 1-3 (L.F.*).

- 233 ' Jesus Christ . . . crucified among you ' [Galatians 3 : 1]. Yet He was not crucified in Galatia, but at Jerusalem. Paul's reason for saying ' among you ' is to declare the power of faith to see events which are at a distance. He does not say simply ' crucified ', but ' evidently set forth, crucified ', meaning that by the eye of faith they saw more distinctly than those who were present as spectators. For many of the latter received no benefit, but the former, who were not eye-witnesses, yet saw it by faith more clearly.

—Chrysostom, *On Galatians* 3 : 1 (L.F.*).

- 234 ' I speak after the manner of men ' [Galatians 3 : 15]. To ' speak after the manner of men ' means to use human examples. Having founded his arguments on the Scriptures, on the miracles wrought among themselves, on the sufferings of Christ, and on the Patriarchs, he goes on to common usages. This he does invariably, to temper his discourse, and make it more agreeable and intelligible to the duller sort. In the same way he argues with the Corinthians : ' Who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock ? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof ? ' [I Corinthians 9 : 7] . . .

In the Old Testament God does the same thing in many instances, like ' Can a woman forget her child ? ' [Isaiah 49 : 15], and again, ' Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ? ' [Isaiah 45 : 9], and in Hosea, He represents a husband set at nought by his wife.

This use of human examples occurs in types also, as when the prophet takes the girdle, and goes down to the potter's house [Jeremiah 13 : 1 and 17 : 2]. The meaning of the present example is that faith is more ancient than the Law, which is later and only temporary, and delivered in order to pave the way for faith.

—Chrysostom, *On Galatians* 3 : 15 (L.F.*).

2. THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION

Irenaeus on the Importance of Tradition, c. 190

235 The preaching of the Church is everywhere consistent, and continues in an even course, and receives testimony from the Prophets, the Apostles, and all the disciples, . . . and through the entire dispensation of God, and that well-founded system which tends to man's salvation, namely, our Faith, which, having received from the Church, we do preserve . . . For where the Church is, there is the Spirit of God ; and where the Spirit of God is, there is the Church, and every kind of grace ; but the Spirit is truth. Those, therefore, who do not partake of Him, are neither nourished into life from the Mother's breasts, nor do they enjoy that most limpid fountain which issues from the Body of Christ ; but they dig for themselves 'broken cisterns' [Jeremiah 2 : 23].

The tradition of the Apostles, therefore, manifested in the entire world, it is possible for all who wish to see the truth to contemplate clearly in every church, and we are in a position to enumerate those who were by the Apostles instituted bishops in the churches, and the successions of these men to our own times . . .

We ought not to seek the truth among others, which it is easy to obtain from the Church, since the Apostles, like a rich man depositing his money in a bank, delivered into her hands in the fullest measure the whole truth—so that every man, whosoever will, can draw from her the water of life . . . Suppose there arise a dispute relative to some important question among us, should we not have recourse to the most ancient churches with which the Apostles held constant intercourse,¹ and learn from them what is certain and clear on the question at issue ? For how should it be if the Apostles themselves had not left us writings ? Should we not, in that case, follow the course of the tradition which they handed down to those to whom they committed churches ?

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3 : 38. 1, 3. 1 and 4. 1 (A.-N.C.L.- S.).

¹ Polycrates does this in his letter on the Easter Controversy (160).

See also Irenaeus in 40 and 128.

Tertullian on Unwritten Traditions in the Church,**c. 200**

236 How can anything come into use, if it has not first been handed down? Even in pleading tradition, you say, written authority must be demanded. Let us enquire, therefore, whether tradition, unless it be written, should not be admitted. Certainly we shall refuse to admit it, unless the example of other observances which, without any document of Scripture, we maintain on the ground of tradition alone, and on the support afterwards of custom, afford us a precedent.

Tertullian then deals with several contemporary customs, including those at Baptism (**118**) and the time of the Eucharist (**127**) and with regard to Fasting (**156**).

If, for these and other such rules, you insist upon having positive injunction in Scripture, you will find none. Tradition will be held out to you as their originator, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer.

—Tertullian, *On the Soldier's Crown* 3 and 4 (A.—N.C.L.S. *).

Origen on the Tradition of Essential Doctrines, c. 250

237 We maintain that that only is to be believed as the truth, which in no way conflicts with the tradition of the Church and Apostles. But the following fact should be understood. The holy Apostles, when preaching the Faith of Christ, took certain doctrines, those namely which they believed to be necessary ones, and delivered them in the plainest terms to all believers. The grounds of their statements they left to be investigated by such as should merit the higher gifts of the Spirit, and in particular by such as should afterwards receive through the Holy Spirit Himself the graces of language, wisdom and knowledge. There were other doctrines, however, about which the Apostles simply said that things were so, keeping silence as to how or why; their intention undoubtedly being to supply the more intelligent of those who came after them, such as should prove to be lovers of wisdom, with an exercise on which to display the fruit of their ability.

Origen then goes on to list the essential doctrines—about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, Immortality, Power of Choice, the Devil, and the Last Things—and points to many areas which are not clearly defined.

—Origen, *On First Principles* 1, Preface 2-3 (Butterworth).

Vincent of Lerins on Scripture and Tradition, 434

The following definition of Scripture and Tradition as the two Pillars of Faith, and of what sound Tradition involves, was normative for the Western Church in the Middle Ages.

- 238 If anyone wishes to detect the deceits of heretics that arise and to avoid their snares, and to keep healthy and sound in a healthy faith, we ought, with the Lord's help, to fortify our faith in a twofold manner—firstly, that is, by the authority of God's Law, then by the Tradition of the Catholic Church.

Here, it may be, some one will ask, 'Since the Canon of Scripture is complete, and is in itself abundantly sufficient, what need is there to join to it the interpretation of the Church?' The answer is that because of the very depth of Scripture all men do not place one identical interpretation upon it. The statements of the same writer are explained by different men in different ways, so much so that it seems almost possible to extract from it as many opinions as there are men.

Vincent goes on to give the instances of thirteen different heresies.

Therefore, because of the intricacies of error, which is so multiform, there is great need for the laying down of a rule for the exposition of Prophets and Apostles in accordance with the standard of the interpretation of the Church Catholic.

Now in the Catholic Church itself we take the greatest care to hold *that which has been believed everywhere, always and by all* . . .

We shall hold to this rule if we follow universality [i.e. ecumenicity], antiquity, and consent. We shall follow universality if we acknowledge that one Faith to be true

which the whole Church throughout the world confesses ; antiquity, if we in no wise depart from those interpretations which it is clear that our ancestors and fathers proclaimed ; consent, if in antiquity itself we keep following the definitions and opinions of all, or certainly nearly all, bishops and doctors alike.

—Vincent of Lerins, *A Reminder* 2 : 1-3 (B.).

Primitive Creeds

1. Creed of c. 150-180

The following is one version of a Creed found in the *Book of the Epistle* of the *Apocalypse* now extant only in an Ethiopic translation.

239 I believe in the Father, the Ruler of the universe,

and in Jesus Christ our Redeemer,

and in the Holy Spirit the Paraclete,

and in the Holy Church,

and in the forgiveness of sins.

—*Book of the Epistle* (16). (Kelly, E.C.C.).

2. Creed of c. 200

240 I believe in God the Father Almighty,

and in His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ,

and in the Holy Spirit, and in the resurrection of the flesh,

and the holy Catholic Church.

—*The Apostolic Tradition* (Kelly, E.C.C.).

The Creed of the Eastern Church

Although Athanasius recorded this Creed in 337, it is probably much older, and the original Baptismal Creed of the Church in Egypt and Persia. It continued to be used there till the acceptance of the Nicene Creed in 451. Note that its framework is historical, not Trinitarian.

241 When a man shall believe in God, the Lord of all, that made the heavens and the earth and the seas and all that in them is,

B. CONFESSION OF ESSENTIAL DOCTRINE—CREEDS

It is generally believed that the first Christian creed was 'Jesus is Lord' (Romans 10:9, I Corinthians 12:3), but that soon a more detailed Confession of Faith was felt to be necessary, including a reference to the death of Christ. (See the creed-like summaries in 55, 57, 103, 119).

Creeds were first simple; then grew more elaborate, to define the doctrine of the Church against this or that heresy. The general framework was Trinitarian.

Primitive Creeds

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and in His only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
and in the Holy Spirit, and in the resurrection of the flesh,
and the holy Catholic Church.

—*The Balyzeh Papyrus* (Kelly, *E.C.C.*).

The Creed of the Persian Church

Although Afrahat recorded this Creed in 337, it is probably much older, and the original Baptismal Creed of the Church in Edessa and Persia. It continued to be used there till the acceptance of the Nicene Creed in 410. Note that its framework is historical, not Trinitarian.

- 241 When a man shall believe in God, the Lord of all, that made the heavens and the earth and the seas and all that in them is,

who made Adam in His image, who gave the Law to Moses, who sent of His Spirit in the prophets, who sent His Messiah into the world.

And that a man should believe in the bringing to life of the dead, and believe also in the Mystery of Baptism—

This is the Faith of the Church of God.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 1 : 19 (Burkitt, *E.C.C.*).

The Creed of Caesarea, before 325

Eusebius the Church Historian presented this Creed, which was orthodox, but not explicit on the points of controversy raised by the Arian heresy, at the Council of Nicaea. Its framework was used for the Creed of Nicaea.

242 We believe in One God, Father Almighty, the Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Word of God, God from God, Light from Light, Life from Life, Only-begotten Son, first-born of all creation, before all the ages begotten from the Father, by whom also all things were made; who for our salvation was incarnate, and lived among men, and suffered, and rose again the third day, and ascended to the Father, and will come again in glory to judge living and dead.

And we believe also in One Holy Spirit.

—Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 1 : 8 (*L.F.*- S.).

The Creed of Nicaea, 325

243 We believe in One God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible :

And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, Only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, Very God from Very God, begotten not made, Consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made, both things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was incarnate, was made man, suffered, and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven, and is coming to judge living and dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

And those who say 'There was when He was not,' and 'Before His generation He was not' and 'He came to be from nothing,' or those who pretend that the Son of God is 'of other *hypostasis*¹ or substance,' or 'created,' or 'alterable,' or 'mutable,' the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematises.

—Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History* 1 : 8 (L.F. -S.*).

² See the note on *Four Important Christological Terms*, between 263 and 264.

The So-called 'Nicene Creed', c. 374

The following Creed, probably based on that of Cyril of Jerusalem (see 71), with the addition of clauses from the Creed of Nicaea, was approved by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 as representing the creed of the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381). It is therefore sometimes called the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed.

244 We believe in One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible :

And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds,¹ Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, Being of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made ; who for us men and our salvation came down from the heavens, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man ; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge both living and dead, whose Kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, who proceedeth from the Father,² who with the Father and Son

¹ The Council of Toledo, in Spain, added in 589 the clause 'God of God' from the Creed of Nicaea.

² The Council of Toledo added 'and the Son'. This addition was officially accepted by the Western Church between 809 and 867. The Greek Church has never accepted it.

together is worshipped and together is glorified, who spoke through the Prophets :

In one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one Baptism unto remission of sins ; we look for a resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

—Epiphanius, *At Anchor* 118 (Hort—K. 2*).

The 'Old Roman Creed', before 400

The following Creed was presented by Marcellus of Ancyra about 340 to Bishop Julius of Rome, to prove that he was orthodox in faith. It is almost identical with a Roman Creed mentioned by Rufinus about 400, and is in fact clearly based on the baptismal creeds of c. 200, recorded in 119.

245 I believe in God Almighty.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord ; who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary ; who was crucified under Pontius Pilate and was buried ; and the third day rose from the dead ; who ascended into heaven ; and sitteth at the right hand of the Father ; whence He cometh to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Church, the remission of sins, the resurrection of the flesh, the life everlasting.

—Epiphanius, *Heresies* 3 : 1. P.G. Vol. 42, 385 D (B.*).

The So-called 'Apostles' Creed', before 750

The complete 'Apostles' Creed', as used today, was clearly developed from the above. The earliest MS containing the complete Creed is dated about 750.

For other—usually heretical—Creeds, see 260, 296, 297, 302.

For the Chalcedonian Definition, see 284.

C. PARTICULAR DOCTRINES AND SOME IMPORTANT HERESIES

During the first five centuries men experimented a great deal in trying to express the main doctrines of the Christian Faith. Often over-emphasis on one side of a truth, or too ready acceptance of contemporary non-Christian presuppositions, led to erroneous statements that were condemned as heresy, but which helped the Church to see more clearly where the truth lay.

I. THE TRINITY

Heresies with regard to the Trinity were of three main kinds :

1. Denial that there are Three separate Persons. For instance, Sabellianism said that God was Father, Son and Holy Spirit in three modes of self-expression.

2. Denial that the Godhead is a Unity, as though Father, Son and Holy Spirit were three separate gods.

3. Assertions that the Father only was truly God ; the Son and Spirit were demigods or lesser gods. Arianism (see 259-260) did this.

The Mystery of the Godhead

Christians recognise that the Godhead is a mystery beyond human understanding ; human statements must always fall short of a full description. The following statements made by the Persian Christian Afrahat in 337, and the Cappadocian theologian Basil the Great in 376, show this.

246 Above the heavens, what is there, who is competent to tell ? Beneath the earth, what is laid, there is none to say ! The firmament, upon what is it stretched out ? Or the heavens, upon what are they hung ? The earth, on what is it pillowed ? Or the deep, in what is it fixed ?¹ We are of Adam, and here with our senses we perceive little. Only this we know : that God is one, and His Messiah one, and one the Spirit, and one the Faith, and one Baptism [Ephesians 4 : 4-6]. More than thus far it does not help us to speak ; if we say more we fall short, and if we investigate [speculate] we are helpless.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 1 : 23 (Burkitt, *E.E.C.**).

¹ Afrahat echoes the questions in Job 38.

247 The word 'to know' has many meanings. We say that we know the greatness of God, His power, His wisdom, His goodness, His providence over us, and the justness of His judgment; but not His very essence. . . . When all these high attributes have been enumerated, are they all names of one essence? And is there the same mutual force in His awfulness and His loving-kindness, His justice and His creative power, His providence and His foreknowledge, and His bestowal of rewards and punishments, His majesty and His providence? In mentioning any of these, do we declare His essence? . . . Let them not ask if we know the essence of God; but let them enquire of us whether we know God to be awful, or just, or merciful. These we confess that we know. . . . We say that we know our God from His operations, but do not undertake to approach near to His essence. His operations come down to us; but His essence is beyond our reach.

—Basil, *Letters* 234 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

The So-called 'Athanasian Creed', c. 420

The following extract from what came to be called the 'Athanasian Creed' is an attempt to define belief in the Trinity in a way that will exclude various heresies.

248 The Catholic Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity; neither confusing the Persons: nor dividing the Substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Spirit; but the Godhead of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one—the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Spirit; the Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, the Holy Spirit uncreated; the Father infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite; the Father eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal; and yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; as also there are not three uncreated, nor three infinities, but one infinite, and one uncreated.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

So the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God ; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God.

So the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord ; and yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For just as we are compelled by the Christian truth to confess each Person by Himself to be both God and Lord ; so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion to speak of three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, not created, nor begotten ; the Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten ; the Holy Spirit is of the Father and the Son,¹ not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

There is therefore one Father, not three Fathers ; one Son, not three Sons ; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits.

And in this Trinity there is no before or after, no greater or less, but all three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal ; so that in all ways, as has been already said, both the Trinity is to be worshipped in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity.

He therefore that would be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.

—*The Quicumque Vult*, 3-28 (S.P.C.K.*).

¹ This statement is Western, and represents the teaching of Augustine, who taught the 'double procession' of the Spirit. This was not accepted by the Greek Church. See 244, note 2.

Severus of Antioch, c. 520

Severus of Antioch (c. 465-538) has been described as 'the leading theologian of the moderate Monophysites'. His doctrine of the Trinity combines the sense of mystery with definition and analogy.

- 249 The holy Trinity is not subject to natural definitions, nor is prone to be investigated by our reason ; because what it is is unknowable. Beyond everything and transcending all thought, It is incomprehensible to the operation of our minds . . .

We say that every Person [*hypostasis*], that has become concrete, has all the qualities of Godhead without diminution, such as goodness, creativity and everything that

belongs to the uncreated nature. In this way we affirm that the Trinity is of the same essence [*ousia*]. The self same essence is perfectly perceived in the three Persons. The Father has the Divine Being in its entirety; in the same way, the Son and the Holy Spirit have it. Therefore, the Father is perfect God, the Son is perfect God, and the Holy Spirit is perfect God...

We affirm that the Being of the three Persons—the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit—is one, that is one Godhead; for the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God...

One may say, for instance, that the humanity of Peter, Paul and John is one. For men are the same in race and essence, but separate from the point of view of individual designation of person. Every one of the persons that belong to the race... participates alike in those things that belong in common to the race. Peter, for example, participates... in rationality, mortality and the possession of mind and knowledge.

Severus then applies his illustration to the doctrine of the Trinity.

Each one of the Persons, therefore, has what they share in common made distinctly and separately individual. The Father, for instance, is unbegotten, is distinct from the others, and possesses a concrete Person. He has the essence, what they share in common, made individual in Him along with being unbegotten. He is God, the Good, the Light, the Life. In the same way, the Son has 'being begotten of the Father' as the property of His person. He has what they share in common and the essence made individual in Him. He is God the begotten, the Good, the Light, the Life. So also is the Holy Spirit. He has 'procession' as the property of His Person. He also has the essence and the unity and what is common made individual in Him. He is the Light that proceeds, the Life, God.

—Severus of Antioch, *Against John the Grammarian* I, pp. 153-157 (V.C.S.*).

2. 'GOD... MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH'

From the beginning Christians taught that God—through the instrumentality of His Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:3)—was the Creator of heaven and earth. This was opposed to contemporary beliefs:

1. Popular Greek philosophy taught that matter was evil, a prison for the spirit, and therefore God was entirely spirit, and could have no direct contact with matter.

2. Zoroaster had taught, and the Persian Magi believed, that there were two gods, Absolute Good and Absolute Evil, each of whom had created—the one the higher things, the other the lower (see 400).

Various attempts were made to make the Christian message acceptable to those holding such beliefs: this led to such heresies as Gnosticism and Marcionism. It led too to the syncretistic religion of Mani. In reply, Augustine taught the important doctrine of creation 'out of nothing.'

Gnosticism

Gnosticism is a maze of different teachings, but is generally characterised by:

1. Denial that God created the world.
2. Denial that Jesus Christ really became man (Docetism 262-263).
3. Denial that there is a resurrection of the body (see 251, 340).
4. Emphasis on the importance of hidden knowledge, available only to a select few, and considered superior to faith.

From the Letter of Ptolemy to Flora, c. 160

250 It remains to identify the God who is the giver of the [Old Testament] Law... This Law was given neither by the perfect God nor by the Devil—this last idea is wholly unacceptable. Therefore the giver of the Law must be one who is different from both of these. He is the creator¹ and fashioner of this whole world and of all that is in it. In nature he is different from both God and Devil. He stands between the two. For this reason he may rightly be called an intermediate being.² [The perfect God is good;

¹ Greek 'Demiourgos', hence 'Demiurge'.

² Literally 'the Midst'.

the Devil is bad]. If the intermediate being, who stands between the two, is neither good nor bad, nor yet unrighteous, he should be regarded specifically as the righteous one, since he is 'umpire' and 'prize-giver' according to his own righteousness. This god is more dependent than the perfect God, and subject to His righteousness . . . He is, however, stronger and mightier than the Adversary [Satan], and he is of an essence and a nature different from the essence of either God or the Adversary. For the essence of the Adversary is corruption and darkness—he is of material substance and composite—whereas the nature of the unbegotten Father of all is incorruption and light, which is self-existent, simple and unitary. The essence of the creator god [is somewhere in between].

—Epiphanius, *Heresies* 33: 7 (Kraft, *Early Christian Thinkers*, pp. 29-30).

The Teaching of Basileides, c. 130

251 Basileides . . . sets forth that Mind was born of the unborn Father; that from him, again, was born Word, from Word Prudence, from Prudence Wisdom and Power, and from Power and Wisdom the powers, and princes, and angels, whom he also calls 'the first'; and that by them the first heaven was made. Then other powers, being formed by emanation from these, created another heaven similar to the first, [and so on, and so on, till there were] three hundred and sixty-five heavens . . . Those angels who occupy the lowest heaven, that, namely, which is visible to us, formed all the things which are in the world . . . The chief of them is he who is thought to be the God of the Jews . . .

But the Father without birth and without name . . . sent His own first-begotten Mind—He it is who is called Christ—to bestow deliverance on them that believe in Him, from the power of those who made the world. [He was not really a man, and not really crucified].¹ For since He was an incorporeal power, and the Mind of the unborn Father, He transfigured Himself as He pleased, and thus ascended to Him who had sent Him, deriding them, because He could not be laid hold of, and was invisible to all.

¹ Basileides actually suggests that Simon of Cyrene was crucified by mistake. The parallels between his teaching and that of Islam should be noted.

Those, then, who know these things, have been freed from the princes who formed the world; so that one must not confess Him who was crucified, but Him who came in the form of a man, and was thought to be crucified, and was called Jesus . . .

Salvation belongs to the soul alone, for the body is by nature subject to corruption . . .

'Do thou,' they say, 'know all' . . . The multitude, however, cannot understand these matters, but only one out of a thousand, or two out of ten thousand.²

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1 : 24. 3-7 (A.-N.C.L. -S.*).

² Notice that all the four elements mentioned above are included in the teaching of Basileides. Later Gnostic teachers are more elaborate, but the essential teaching remains the same.

Marcionism, c. 150

The teaching of Marcion, accepted only for a short time in the Roman Empire by his followers, lingered on in Persia till at least at Ninth Century, doubtless because of its appeal to the Zoroastrian mind.

252 Marcion of Pontus [called the God of the Old Testament] a worker of evils, delighting in wars, inconstant in judgment and self-contradictory . . . Jesus came from the Father who is above the god that made the world . . . He came to Judaea in the time of Pontius Pilate the Governor, who was the Procurator of Tiberius Caesar, and was manifest in the form of a man to all that were in Judaea, destroying the Prophets and the Law and all the works of that god who made the world . . .

[Marcion] mutilated the Gospel according to Luke, removing all the narratives of the Lord's birth, and also removing much of the teaching in the discourses of the Lord in which He is most clearly described as acknowledging the maker of this universe to be his Father . . . He mutilated the Epistles of the Apostle Paul in the same manner, removing whatever is clearly spoken by the Apostle concerning the God who made the world, where he says that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and setting aside all the Apostle's teaching drawn from the Prophetic Writings which predict the advent of the Lord.

And then he says that salvation will be of our souls only, of those souls which have learned His teaching.

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1 : 27. 2-3 (B.*).

The Syncretistic Religion of Mani, 216-c. 276

Mani, a Persian subject, began his teaching at Ctesiphon in 242, and though he won the favour of Shapur I, he was imprisoned by Bihram I, and died in prison in 276 or 277. His teaching was not really a heresy, but an attempt to combine several religions, especially Zoroastrianism and Gnosticism. He taught that Good (Light) and Evil (Darkness) were eternal principles opposed to one another. Man, a particle of light, has been entangled in the dark material universe. The Living Spirit of Good has sent his Third Messenger, or Mind (incarnated in Mithra, Jesus, Mani himself, and others) to help to rescue the imprisoned particles of light. For this to take place, interior illumination is necessary, and the fellowship of the Manichee 'Church'. Man must withdraw from the contamination of the flesh.

This religion spread westwards as far as North Africa and Gaul, and Augustine was for many years a Manichee. It survived longest in Asia, reaching China, and resisting till the late Middle Ages both Christianity and Islam.

Mani's Claim

- 253 Wisdom and deeds have always from time to time been brought to mankind by the messengers of God. So in one age they have been brought by the messenger called Buddha to India, in another by Zaradusht [Zoroaster] to Persia, in another by Jesus to the West. Therefore this revelation has come down, this prophecy in this last age, through me, Mani, messenger of the God of truth to Babylonia.

—Mani, *Shahbuhragan* (Burkitt, *The Religion of the Manichees*, p. 37).

A Manichee Hymn

The following Manichee hymn is addressed to Jesus, as Mind of God.

- 254 We will reach out our hands in invocation,
And rest our eyes upon this Thy form.
And our mouths will we open to invoke Thee,

And our tongues prepare for laudation.
 Thee we invoke, who art Life entire,
 Thee we praise, Jesus the Brilliant ! New Aeon !¹ . . .
 Come with Grace, liberated Lord !
 Come with aid, good Spirit, Apostle with peace !
 Helper of the frail and Conqueror of the aggressors !
 Come with Grace, new Lord !
 Come with Grace, Redeemer of the subjected, Healer of
 the wounded !
 Come with Grace, Awakener of the sleeping and Arouser
 of the sleepy, Thou who causest the dead to arise !
 Come with Grace, true Word, great Luminary, and flooding
 Light !
 Come with Grace, new Lord and new Day ! . . .
 Save those who have sought refuge, and have mercy upon
 us !
 O Most Beloved and loving !
 We have beheld Thee,² new Aeon, and we have fallen at
 Thy feet, Thou who art all love.
 Drunk with joy, we have seen Thee, loving Lord,
 And we avow Thy name, ' M ' and ' S ' [Messiah].³
 Sunder us from amid the sinful,
 And free us from amid the aggressors ! . . .
 [We praise Thy] name, that is all Light,
 And Thy noble greatness, that is all Freedom.
 Praise be to Thy name, Father !
 And devotion to Thy greatness !
 So be it now and evermore.

—*Manichee Hymn*, lines 2-7, 10-18, 26-32, 39-43 (Widengren, *Mani and Manichaeism*, pp. 86-88).

¹ Names like Aeon, Healer, Awakener, Word, Luminary were commonly used of the intermediaries in Gnosticism.

² After the prayer ' Come with Grace ', ' Save and have mercy ', comes this avowal that Christ has come, and has been seen by interior illumination.

³ Manichees, like Gnostics, loved passwords and secret symbols, recognisable only by those who had special knowledge.

Augustine's Doctrine of Creation, c. 400

God Created out of Nothing

Augustine replied to the Greek dualism between God and Matter, and the Manichaean dualism between a Good and an Evil God, by stating that God alone was eternal, and that He had created the universe out of nothing.

255 But *how* didst Thou make the heaven and the earth, and what was the tool of such a mighty work as Thine? For it was not like a human worker forming body from body . . . He imposes the form on something already existing and having some sort of being, such as clay, or stone or wood or gold or such like . . . Thou didst not hold anything in Thy hand from which to fashion the heaven and the earth, for where couldst Thou have gotten what Thou hadst not made in order to make something with it? Is there, indeed, anything at all except because Thou art? Thus Thou didst speak and they were made, and by Thy Word thou didst make them all. (11:7)

All things have been made, not from the essence of God, but from nothing. (12:24)

—Augustine, *Confessions*, sections as noted above (L.C.C.).

All Things are Good

Augustine had to answer the Manichaeian objection: 'If God made all things, did He make evil too? Either evil is eternal, or God made it!' Augustine's answer was that all things are good, but some goods are greater, and some lesser; sin arises from choosing the lesser good.

256 What, after all, is anything we call evil except the privation of good? . . . All of nature, therefore, is good, since the Creator of all nature is supremely good. But nature is not supremely and immutably good as is the Creator of it. Thus the good in created things can be diminished and augmented. For good to be diminished is evil; still, however much it is diminished, something must remain of its original nature as long as it exists at all . . . Every actual entity¹ is therefore good; a greater good if it cannot be corrupted, a lesser good if it can be. Yet only the foolish and unknowing can deny that it is still good even when corrupted.

—Augustine, *Manual on Faith, Hope and Love* 11-12 (L.C.C.).

¹ lit. 'nature'.

It should be noted that, while Augustine's doctrine of creation out of nothing was accepted as orthodox, his teaching about the origin of evil is simply a personal attempt to solve a problem which cannot be solved by human reasoning.

3. 'JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD'

The Meaning of 'Son'

From the beginning, Christians were aware that the term 'Son of God' might be misunderstood.

Athenagoras on the Sonhood of Christ, c. 77

- 257** We acknowledge also a Son of God. Nor let anyone think it ridiculous that God should have a Son. For though the poets, in their fictions, represent the gods as no better than men, our mode of thinking is not the same as theirs, concerning either God the Father or the Son. But the Son of God is the Word of the Father, in idea and in operation; for by Him and through Him were all things made [John 1:3], the Father and the Son being one. And, the Son being in the Father and the Father in the Son, by the unity and power of Divine Spirit, the Son of God is the Father's Intelligence and Word.

[If you ask what is meant by the Son] I will state briefly that He is the First Product of the Father, not because he was brought into existence—for God from the beginning, being Eternal Intelligence, had His Word in Himself, being eternally rational¹—but because He came forth to be the idea and energising power of all material things.

—Athenagoras, *A Plea for the Christians*, 10 (A.-N.C.L.*).

¹ Greek 'logikos' translated 'of the word' in I Peter 2:2.

For other uses of the term 'Word' for the Son, as explaining His relationship to the Father, see 94-98, etc.

Theodore of Mopsuestia on God as Father of Christ, c. 420

- 258** God is Father in a way that belongs only to the Divine nature. All the created beings obtain the power of being fathers after their creation . . . God the Father is truly a Father; and He did not receive this in time, because He did not have a Son after a time, but the latter was with Him from eternity and was from Him a Son also from eternity . . . As He is not like us He is not a Father like us, because He did not receive the power of becoming a Father in time . . . He is a Father in truth and from eternity, a complete nature, with whom His child exists also from eternity.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 2 (Mingana, *W.S.* 5, pp. 29, 30 and 31).

Is the Son really God? The Arian Heresy

Various heresies denied the full Divinity of the Son. For instance, the Adoptionists stated that He became God at the time of His Baptism. The most important and dangerous heresy was that of Arius (d. 335), whose words are quoted as follows:

259 What do we say, and believe, and what have we taught, and what do we teach? That the Son is not unbegotten, nor in any way part of the unbegotten; nor from some lower essence [i.e. from matter]; but that by [the Father's] own will and counsel He has subsisted before time, and before ages, as God... only-begotten, unchangeable. And that He was not, before He was begotten, or created, or purposed, or established. For He was not unbegotten.

We are persecuted because we say, 'The Son had a beginning, but God is without a beginning.' This is really the cause of our persecution; and, likewise, because we say that He is from nothing. And this we say, because He is neither part of God, nor of any lower essence. For this we are persecuted; the rest you know.

—Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 1: 5. 3-4 (N. & P.-N.F.-S.).

Arianism was condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325—see **243** for specific condemnation of Arian views), but was adopted by Constantius (337-361—see **365-367**). It was propagated by Theophilus in Arabia and Ethiopia (see **36**). It was also the faith of the Goths, whose first Bishop, the missionary Ulfilas (see **38**) was consecrated in 341. It died out, however, by the end of the Fifth Century.

The Creed of Ulfilas, 381

260 I, Ulfilas, Bishop and Confessor, have always thus believed, and in this one and true faith I make my testament before my Lord:

I believe there is one God, the Father, alone unbegotten and invisible;

And I believe in His Only-begotten Son, our Lord and God, Creator and Maker of the whole creation, not having any like unto Him—therefore there is one God of all, who is also God of our God¹—

¹ This suggests that Christ was a lesser God than the Father.

And in one Holy Spirit, an enlightening and sanctifying power², . . . neither God nor Lord, but a minister of Christ, . . . subjected and obedient in all things to the Son, and in the Son subjected and obedient in all things to [His] God and Father.

—*Creed of Ulfilas* (Scott, *Ulfilas*, p. 109).

² It is not clear whether Ulfilas thinks of the Holy Spirit as a Person or not.

4. 'JESUS CHRIST... WAS INCARNATE, ... AND WAS MADE MAN'

The real humanity of Jesus Christ, and the fact that One worshipped as God actually died on a Cross, was the greatest single stumbling-block to non-Christian presuppositions, whether Jewish, Greek, or Zoroastrian. See I Corinthians 1:21-24, Augustine on Platonism (84), and The Approach to Fire Worshipers (112).

The basic difficulty was that people thought of man as utterly and completely different from God, as the Muslim does today. This difference was usually stressed by Christian thinkers, and the complementary truth that God and man had something in common was not fully grasped. This is brought out by the following passage in Theodore's exposition of the Nicene Creed.

Man in the Image of God

261 Since we were created in the image of God [Genesis 1:27], we picture to ourselves the higher things that are said of God through an image taken from things that belong to us... It is clear that there is a great difference between us and God; and this difference we ought not to overlook when thinking of the Divine nature [of Christ] and the works done by it.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 2 (Mingana, *W.S.* 5, p. 33).

Many efforts were made to overcome this difficulty, either by compromise with non-Christian thought, or by attempts to present the Christian truth so that it could be understood by those with such presuppositions. In particular, we must note the following:

1. Docetism, which said that Jesus only *appeared* to become man, and die. His humanity and mortality were an illusion, like the *avatar* of a Hindu god. This was the Gnostic view (see also 250-252).

2. Modalism (such as the teaching of Sabellius—see under 'The Trinity' above) which looked on the Son as a mode, or expression, of God.

3. Apollinarianism, which denied the full humanity of Christ by saying that His soul and spirit were not human.

4. Nestorianism, which seemed, by excessive care to distinguish between Christ's divinity and humanity, to divide Him into two persons.

5. Monophysitism, which seemed, in reaction to Nestorianism, to allow Christ's humanity to be swallowed up in His divinity.

Docetism

The Warning of Ignatius, c. 115

262 Stop your ears, therefore, when anyone speaks to you apart from Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, who was the Son of Mary, who was truly born, who both ate and drank, was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate, was truly crucified and died, in the sight of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth; who was truly raised from the dead, when His Father raised Him, and His Father in like manner will raise us also who believe in Him, through Christ Jesus, without whom we can have no true life.

But if, as some say, who are without God, that is, unbelievers, that He suffered only in semblance—but it is *they* who are a semblance!¹—why am I in chains, and why do I pray to fight wild beasts? Then I am dying in vain. In that case I am speaking falsely of the Lord.

—Ignatius, *Trallians* 9 and 10 (Goodspeed, *A.F.**).

¹ The translation of this expression has been altered, to bring out the passion with which Ignatius, on his way to martyrdom, is speaking. Otherwise the translation is Goodspeed's.

A Story about the Boy Jesus, Second Century

The following apocryphal story, from the Gnostic *Gospel of Thomas*, suggests that Jesus was not a real boy, but just appeared to be a boy, and was God in disguise.

263 This little child Jesus, when he was five years old, was playing at the ford of a brook . . . He made soft clay, and out of it modelled twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath day . . . A certain Jew saw what Jesus was doing, playing on the Sabbath day, and he went away at once and told his father Joseph . . . Joseph came to the place and saw, and he cried out to Him: 'Why are you doing these things

on the Sabbath? It is not lawful.' But Jesus clapped his hands, and cried out to the sparrows, saying to them 'Go!' and the sparrows took flight and went away chirping. When the Jews saw it, they were amazed, and went away and told their chief men what they had seen Jesus do.

—*Gospel of Thomas*, Greek Text A, 2 : 1-5 (James, *A.N.T.**)

This story may be compared with a similar account in the *Qur'an*, Surah 3 : 48 and 5 : 110.

Four Important Christological Terms

Before we approach Apollinarianism, Nestorianism and Monophysitism, it is worthwhile noting the usage of four important Greek theological terms. This was not consistent, and the fact led to a good deal of misunderstanding, especially between Nestorians and Monophysites.

1. *Prosopon* was used by earlier theologians to mean a *Person* of the Trinity.

The Syriac equivalent is *parsopa*.

2. *Hypostasis* was used by earlier theologians to mean a *nature* (i.e. Christ's human or Divine natures), but by Apollinaris and later theologians to mean a *Person* of the Trinity. At the Council of Chalcedon *prosopon* and *hypostasis* are said to mean the same thing.

The Syriac equivalent is *qnuma*, and Eastern writers normally used it to mean *nature*, though their usage was sometimes ambiguous. See 280, note 1.

The Arabic equivalent is *aqum*, and is used in Urdu today to mean a *Person* of the Trinity!

3. *Physis* was used by later theologians to mean *nature*. Those who stated like Eutyches that after the incarnation Christ had only one nature, were therefore called monophysites. In Christology some theologians equated *physis* with *hypostasis*.

4. *Theotokos* was used by Orthodox and Monophysite writers to mean *Mother of God*, and as applied to Mary meant that Christ was in fact fully God. Nestorian writers considered it to mean *Mother of the Godhead*, and rejected it because they considered her Mother of Christ's manhood only. The word means *God-bearing*.

The fact that there was misunderstanding widened the gap between Orthodox, Nestorian and Monophysite; there was also, however, a real difference in emphasis.

In the passages used, I have tried to express what the writer meant to say, adding where necessary the Greek or Syriac word used.

Non-Theological Factors

Three important non-theological factors also entered into the disputes on matters of Christology.

1. Rivalry between the Patriarchates of Alexandria, Antioch and Constantinople. Theodore and Nestorius were of the School of Antioch; Cyril was of Alexandria. Nestorius, as Patriarch of Constantinople was the bitter rival of Cyril the Patriarch of Alexandria; so later were Flavian of Constantinople and Dioscorus of Alexandria.

2. National rivalries. Hostilities between the Roman and Persian Empires encouraged the acceptance of different creeds by their churches. In the Seventh Century Monophysitism was associated in Egypt with anti-Byzantine nationalism.

3. Personalities. Theodore was held in immense respect in the Syriac-speaking churches, especially in the Persian Empire. Nestorius was hasty, and Cyril was ambitious, and neither made any real attempt to understand the other.

Apollinarianism

The Heresy of Apollinaris of Laodicea, c. 310-c. 390

Apollinaris taught that, while man was body, mind and spirit, Christ had no human mind and spirit, but the Word united with a human body.

- 264 The flesh, being dependent for its motions on some other principle of movement and action—whatever that principle may be—is not of itself a complete living entity, but in order to become one enters into fusion with something else. So it united itself with the heavenly Governing Principle [i.e. the Word] and was fused with it . . . Thus out of the moved and the Mover was compounded a single living entity—not two, nor one composed of two complete, self-moving principles. (232)

265 [In the God-man] the Divine Energy¹ [i.e. the Word] fulfils the rôle of the animating spirit and of the human mind. (204)

266 [Christ was one incarnate nature, because] the body is not of itself a nature, because it is neither vivifying in itself nor capable of being singled out from that which vivified it. Nor is the Word, on the other hand, to be distinguished as a separate nature apart from His incarnate state, since it was in the flesh, and not apart from the flesh, that the Lord dwelt on earth. (259)

—Apollinaris, *Fragments*, numbered above as by Lietzmann (Kelly, *E.C.D.**).

¹ Apollinaris thought of the power and energy of the Word as giving Christ life and victory over sin.

Objections to Apollinarianism

The following objections are taken from a Synodal Letter of Pope Damasus, written in c. 377.

267 They venture to say that our God and Saviour Jesus Christ took from the Virgin Mary human nature incomplete, i.e. without mind . . . Now if human nature were taken incomplete, then the gift of God is incomplete, and our salvation is incomplete, because human nature has not been saved in its entirety . . .

Further, the essence of the first sin itself and of the entire perdition lies in man's mind ; for if, at the first, man's mind to choose good and evil had not perished, he would not have died. How then are we to suppose that, at the last, that needed no salvation which is acknowledged to have been chief in sinning ?

We, who know that we have been saved whole and entire according to the profession of the Catholic Church ; profess that complete God took complete man.

—Damasus, *Epistle* 2, fragment 2 (K.2).

Apollinarianism was condemned by the Council of Constantinople in 381, and died out shortly after, though it clearly had an influence on Monophysitism.

Theodore of Mopsuestia and the Two Natures of Christ

Theodore, Bishop of Mopsuestia from 392 to 428, the great exponent of literal, as opposed to allegorical, biblical interpretation (see 226-229), has been described by Mingana as 'profound thinker and independent enquirer.' He wrote in Greek, but all his important works were translated into Syriac in Edessa in the Fifth Century (see 28, 29), and were widely studied in the Church of the East. He was the personal friend of Chrysostom, and his saintly character was such that it was not till 553, 125 years after his death, that the Church dared to condemn him openly. It was this condemnation more than anything else that led the Persian Church to break with the Greek Church, and adopt a Nestorian Confession of Faith (see 301, 302). His teaching in certain aspects was amplified by Nestorius.

The following passages are taken from the Syriac version of Theodore's *On the Nicene Creed*, a series of ten lectures for catechumens. Lectures 3-8 deal with Christ the Son of God, and repeat over and over again the importance of distinguishing His two natures.

Jesus Christ 'the Man whom God put on'

Theodore's central teaching is based on a literal interpretation of such verses as 'he took upon himself the form of a servant' (Philippians 2:7) and 'He spake of the temple of his body' (John 2:21).

- 268 This name [Jesus Christ] is that of the man whom God put on . . . The blessed Paul said: 'Of whom is Christ in the flesh, who is God over all' [Romans 9:5]—not that He is God by nature¹ from the fact that He is of the house of David in the flesh, but he said 'in the flesh' in order to indicate the human nature that was assumed. He said 'God over all' in order to indicate the Divine nature which is higher than all, and which is the Lord. He used both words of one Person in order to teach the close union of the two natures, and in order to make manifest the majesty and the honour that came to the man who was assumed by God who put him on.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 3 (Mingana, W.S. PP. 36-37).

¹ In Greek Theodore uses *physis*, translated *qnoma* in Syriac.

269 He is both Lord and Son of David : Son of David because of His nature, and Lord because of the honour that came to Him. And He is high above David His father because of the nature that assumed Him.

This is the reason why when our Lord asked the Pharisees : ' Whose son is the Christ ? ' and they answered : ' The son of David ' [Matthew 22 : 42], He did not disapprove of the answer given. It is the same Evangelist Matthew . . . who wrote also at the beginning of his Gospel : ' The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.' He would not have taught this at the beginning of his Gospel had he known that our Lord did not approve of it . . .

All the Pharisees and the Jews were expecting Christ to come as a simple man from the seed of David. In this way they were in harmony with the words of the Prophets, and were not aware that the One who assumed the other who is from the seed of David, was the Only Begotten of God, who dwelt in Him and through Him performed all the Economy of our salvation, and united Him to Himself and made Him higher than all the creation.

It is because the Pharisees were not aware of all this that our Lord . . . said to them : ' How then doth David in spirit call him Lord ? . . . If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ? ' [verses 43, 45]. In these words He gave them, by a hint only and not openly, the doctrines concerning, the Godhead. At that time they transcended the intelligence of the Jews so much that even the blessed Disciples were not aware of their meaning before the Crucifixion. ' If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also ' [John 8 : 19. Compare also John 14 : 9, etc.]

This was the reason why He said : ' Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up, ' which the Evangelist interpreted : ' For he spake of the temple of his body ' [John 2 : 19, 21]. He called the man who was assumed the temple, while showing that He Himself was dwelling in that temple, . . . not a temple for a short time only, and not one in which God the Word sometimes dwelt and sometimes not, but a temple from which He will never be separated, as it possesses an ineffable union with the One who is dwelling in it.

Two Natures but One Person

270 Our blessed Fathers [of Nicaea]... follow the Sacred Books which speak differently of natures, while referring [them] to one Person [*prosopon, parsopa*] on account of the close union that took place between them, so that they might not be believed that they were separating the perfect union between the one who was assumed and the One who assumed. If this union were destroyed the one who was assumed would not be seen more than a mere man like ourselves. The Sacred Books refer the two words [i.e. natures] as if to one Son, so that they might show in the same faith both the glory of the Only Begotten and the honour of the man whom He assumed.

From the fact that we say two natures we are not constrained to say two Lords or two Sons : this would be extreme folly... They are two by nature and one by union : two by nature, because there is a great difference between the natures, and one by union because the adoration offered to the one who has been assumed is not differentiated from that to the One who assumed him, as the former is the temple from which it is not possible for the One who dwells in it to depart.

Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 6 and 8 (Mingana, *W.S.* 5, pp. 63, 64 and 90).

The Two Natures and the Work of Christ

Perhaps the most striking passage in Theodore's lectures is the following, where he speaks of the work of Christ for the salvation of men. To bring out the meaning, the words *He, Him* etc. are spelt with capitals when they refer to the Divine nature, and with small letters, in italics, when they refer to the human nature.

271 'Who for us children of men and for our salvation came down from heaven': what is His coming down and what is its aim? And what did [man] do that He humbled Himself to such an extent for him as to become like him, and to take upon Him *the form of a servant* [Philippians 2:7], and to be *a man* for our salvation, and to make Himself manifest to all, and to assume upon Himself all that which belonged to the nature of *that man*, and to be exercised in all [human faculties]? And He perfected *him* by His power, so that He did not remove from *him* the [bodily] death which he

received according to the law of *his* nature—but while He was with *him* He delivered *him* by act of grace from real death and from the corruption of the grave [Acts 2 : 27], and raised *him* from the dead, and made *him* worthy of a high honour, concerning which He said : 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up' [John 2 : 19], which He did. He was not separated from *him* in *his* crucifixion but He remained with *him* until with help *he* loosed the pains [Acts 2 : 24],¹ and He raised *him* from the dead and transferred *him* to immortal life, and made *him* immortal, incorruptible and immutable ; and He caused *him* to go up to heaven, where *he* is now sitting at the right hand of God ; and *he* is 'far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come' [Ephesians 1 : 21], as the blessed Paul testifies ; and *he* constantly receives adoration from all creation because of *his* close union with God the Word.

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 5 (Mingana, *W.S.* 5, pp. 53-54).

¹ i.e. the Divine nature helped the human nature to overcome death.

The Two Natures and the Second Coming

272 'He shall come again to judge both the living and the dead' . . . With the addition of 'again' (the Fathers) referred to His Godhead.

On the other hand, it is clear that Acts 1 : 11 refers primarily to His appearance as a man, the very man whom the disciples had seen and heard. But in the beginning it was the Godhead that came, not the man.

[The Fathers mean that] He will come again through the same man who has been assumed, because of the ineffable union that man had with God. This is the reason why the blessed Paul, after saying, 'We look for the glorious appearing of the great God,' added : 'and the Saviour Jesus Christ' [Titus 2 : 13].

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, *On the Nicene Creed* 7 (Mingana, *W.S.* 5, pp. 53-54).

An Eastern Testimony to Theodore, c. 560

- 273 St. Theodore the Interpreter was the first to explain philosophically and rationally the economy of the Divine mysteries of the Birth and the Passion of our Lord.

—Mashiha-Zakha *Chronicle of Arbil* (S.S. I, p. 141. English in *W.S.* 5, p. 5).

Nestorius, Patriarch of Constantinople 428-431

Nestorius objected to the term *Theotokos* for the Virgin Mary (see above under *Some Important Christological Terms*), and said she should be called *Christotokos* ('Christ-bearing'), or else called 'Man-bearing' as well. His ideas were little different from those of Theodore, but he stated them much more beligerently.

- 274 I hold the natures apart, but unite the worship. (*Loofs* 262)

- 275 God the Word and the man in whom He came to dwell are not numerically two; for the Person [*prosopon*] of both was one in dignity and honour, worshipped by all creation, in no way and at no time divided by difference of purpose or will. (*Loofs* 224)

- 276 The union of God the Word with them [i.e. the human body and soul] is neither 'hypostatic' nor 'natural', but voluntary.¹ (*Heracleides* 262)

- 277 It is Christ who is the Person [*prosopon*] of union . . . The two natures were united by their union in a single Person. (*Fragments* 212, 210)

—Nestorius, *Selections from Fragments*, as noted (*Kelly, E.C.D.* pp. 312-315).

¹ Literally 'not according to the *hypostasis* or the *physis*.' Cyril of Alexandria, Nestorius's opponent, said it was 'hypostatic'.

Why We call Mary 'the Mother of God'

Rabbula of Antioch, who was Bishop of Edessa from 411 to 435, spoke out in a sermon in favour of the use of *Theotokos*.

- 278 We say with uplifted voice without deception, that Mary is the Mother of God, and with justice her name should be so heralded, for she became on earth Mother to God the Word

by His will, even to Him who according to the course of His nature had no mother in heaven. For 'God sent his Son and he was born of a woman,' cries the Apostle [Galatians 4:4]. Now if anyone dare to say that according to the course of nature she gave birth to God the Word, not only does he not say well, but he confesses wrongly. For 'Mother of God' we call the Holy Virgin, not because . . . she gave birth to the Godhead, but because God the Word was born from her when He became a man . . . This does not mean that from the Blessed Virgin our Lord obtained His first beginning, for the Word was in the beginning with the Father.

—Rabbula, *Sermon*. Overbeck, p. 242 (Burkitt, *E.E.C.*).

Diodore of Tarsus and the Birth of Christ

Diodore of Tarsus (fl. 378-394—see 29) was an earlier theologian of the same school as Theodore. He plainly held that Christ the man did not receive the honour of union with the Word of God while in Mary's womb, but only at the point of His birth.

- 279 While the flesh was of Mary, and before it was assumed, it was of the earth and was not different in any way from other 'fleshes'. Like Levi who gave tithes while he was still in the loins and received honour when he was born [Hebrews 7:9], in the same way the Lord, when he was in the womb of the Virgin, was of her essence [*ousia*], and He did not have the honour of Sonship. But when He was formed and became the temple of God the Word and received the Only begotten, He was bestowed with the honour of the name and subsequently received also from Him honour.

—Diodore of Tarsus, quoted in Severus of Antioch, *Against John the Grammarian*, I, p. 182 (V.C.S.*).

Severus quotes Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorius as holding the same view, but the passages can be interpreted differently. The following is the passage from Theodore:

- 280 When they ask whether Mary was *anthropotokos* [Mother of man] or *Theotokos*, we shall answer that she was both . . . By nature, she was *anthropotokos*; he who was in the womb of

Mary was man, and he came forth from there. She is *Theotokos*, because God was in the man that was born.¹

—Theodore of Mopsuestia, quoted in Severus of Antioch, *Against John the Grammarian*, I, pp. 134-135 (V.C.S.*).

¹ This can mean, as Severus believed it did, that God entered the man when he was born; but it is more probable that it means that God was already in the man when he was born. The confession of 612 (302) teaches that the union of the two natures took place 'from the first moment of conception'; this was the teaching of Babai the Great (fl. 607-628); and 'Abd-ishu' the canonist (see 17) says clearly that at the Annunciation 'God the Word united Himself at the moment with that which he formed simultaneously, and without human seed, in the womb of the Holy Virgin' (*The Book of the Pearl* 3:2).

It is clear, however, that Nestorians were believed by some of their opponents to teach that Christ was God-man from birth only, and for this reason to object to the title *Theotokos* used alone.

Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, 412-444

Cyril of Alexandria was the determined opponent of Nestorius, both because of the rivalry of their Patriarchal Sees, and of a genuine theological disagreement. He is considered Orthodox, but later on the Monophysites also were to look on him as their pioneer and champion. The following passage is from his second letter to Nestorius (430).

281 We do not... assert that there was any change in the nature of the Word when it became flesh, or that it was transformed into an entire man, consisting of soul and body; but we say that the Word, in a manner indescribable and inconceivable, united personally to Himself flesh animated with a reasonable soul, and thus became man and was called the Son of Man. And this was not by a mere act of will or favour...

The natures which were brought together to form a true unity were different; but out of both is one Christ and one Son... The Deity and Manhood, by their inexpressible and inexplicable concurrence into unity, have produced for us the one Lord and Son Jesus Christ. It is in this sense that He is said to have been born also after a woman's flesh, though he existed and was begotten from the Father before all ages...

It was not that an ordinary man was first born of the Holy Virgin, and that afterwards the Word descended upon Him. He was united with the flesh in the womb itself, and thus is

said to have undergone a birth after the flesh, inasmuch as He made His own the birth of His own flesh . . .

The Deity is impassible because it is incorporeal. But the body which had become His own body, suffered these things [pain and death], and therefore He himself is said to have suffered them for us. The impassible was in the body which suffered . . . The body of the Lord is not alien from the Lord ; and it is with this body that He sits at the Father's right hand.

—Cyril, *Epistle* 4 (B.).

Nestorius and his doctrines were condemned at the Council of Ephesus in 431, under the leadership of Cyril, and Nestorius was deposed and banished to Egypt, where he died in 451, after much suffering.

The Admissions of Eutyches, 448

Eutyches, the Superior of a Monastery in Constantinople, who lived c. 380-456, was the first thorough-going Monophysite. The following is a report of his questioning before Flavian, Patriarch of Constantinople.

282 *Flavian*—Do you acknowledge Christ to be of two natures ?

Eutyches—I have never yet presumed to speculate about the nature of my God, the Lord of heaven and earth ; I admit that I have never said that He is consubstantial with us . . . I confess that the Holy Virgin is consubstantial with us, and that of her our God was incarnate.

Florentius—Since the Mother is consubstantial with us, then surely the Son is also ?

Eutyches—Please observe that I have not said that the body of a man became the body of God, but the body was human, and the Lord was incarnate of the Virgin. If you wish me to add that the body was consubstantial with ours, I will do so ; but I take the word consubstantial in such a way as not to deny that He is the Son of God. Hitherto I have altogether avoided the phrase 'consubstantial after the flesh' . . .

Florentius—Do you or do you not admit that our Lord who is of the Virgin is consubstantial [with us] and of two natures after the incarnation ?

Eutyches—... I admit that our Lord was of two natures before the union, but after the union one nature... I follow the doctrine of the blessed Cyril and the holy Fathers and the holy Athanasius.

—*Council of Constantinople*,¹ Session 7 (B.).

¹ Not, of course, the Council of Constantinople of 381.

The Tome of Leo, 449

It was a letter from Pope Leo the Great of Rome (Pope 440–461) that was decisive in bringing about the condemnation of Eutyches at the Council of Chalcedon in 451. The following short extract gives the main objection to the Monophysite position.

283 The... Only-begotten, eternal Son of the eternal Father was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary. But this birth in time has taken nothing from, and added nothing to, that Divine eternal nativity...

We could not overcome the author of sin and death [Satan] unless He [Christ] had taken our nature and made it His own...

That birth, uniquely marvellous and marvellously unique, ought not to be understood in such a way as to preclude the distinctive properties of the kind [i.e. of humanity] through the new mode of creation... Thus the properties of each nature and substance were preserved entire, and came together to form one Person. Humility was assumed by majesty, weakness by strength, mortality by eternity; and to pay the debt that we had incurred, an inviolable nature was united to a nature that can suffer. And so, to fulfil the conditions of our healing, the man Jesus Christ, one and the same Mediator between God and man, was able to die in respect of the one, unable to die in respect of the other.

—Leo, *Epistles* 28, 2 and 3 (B.*).

The Definition of the Council of Chalcedon, 451

The Council of Chalcedon, which condemned Eutyches, tried to steer a middle course between Nestorianism and Monophysitism. Although it uses the term *Theotokos*, the Persian Church accepted it, while rejecting the decisions of the Council of

Ephesus. The Monophysites accepted Ephesus, and rejected Chalcedon.

284 After the example of the holy Fathers, we all with one voice confess our Lord Jesus Christ one and the same Son, the same perfect in Godhead, the same perfect in manhood, very God and very man, the same consisting of a reasonable soul and a body, of one substance with the Father as touching the Godhead, the same of one substance with us as touching the manhood, like us in all things, sin excepted; begotten of the Father before the worlds as touching the Godhead, the same in these last days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God [*Theotokos*], as touching the manhood—one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without conversion, without division, never to be separated; the distinction of natures being in no wise done away because of the union, but rather the characteristic property of each nature being preserved, and concurring into one Person [*prosopon*] and one Subsistence [*hypostasis*]¹, not as if Christ were parted or divided into two Persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ; even as the Prophets from the beginning spoke concerning Him, and our Lord Jesus Christ has instructed us, and the Symbol of the Fathers² has handed down to us.

—Council of Chalcedon, Act 5 (Heurtley, *Our Faith and the Creed*, pp. 216-217*).

¹ See *Four Important Christological Terms*, 1 and 2.

² The Creed of Nicaea.

The 'Non-Chalcedonians'

A large section of the Eastern Church, especially in Egypt, Palestine and Syria, rejected the Chalcedonian Definition because it contained the phrase 'in two natures', which they considered Nestorian; and because it did not accept the phrases 'of two natures' and 'one incarnate nature.' Though generally called 'Monophysite', from the start they rejected Eutychianism. Their leading theologian was Severus of Antioch (c. 465-538).

Excommunication of Eutychians by a 'Non-Chalcedonian', c. 465

Isaiah and Theophilus, two bishops who held out-and-out Monophysite views, claimed to be of the same party as Timothy Aleurus, the exiled non-Chalcedonian Patriarch of Alexandria. Timothy replied by excommunicating them.

- 285 And I now give sentence upon Isaiah and Theophilus who say that the body of the Lord is of His own Divine nature, and not of ours, thereby cutting themselves off from the fellowship of the holy Fathers and mine; that no man henceforth hold communion with them.

—Quoted in Zechariah the Rhetorician, *Chronicles* p. 99 (V.C.S.).

Severus of Antioch and his Christology

Objections to the Chalcedonian Definition

- 286 Had it confessed hypostatic union, the Council would have confessed also 'one incarnate nature of God the Word', and would not have defined that the one Christ is 'in two natures,' thereby dissolving the union.

(*The Lover of Truth*, p. 187)

- 287 See, how they declared it heretical to affirm 'of two natures', and judged it orthodox to say 'two united natures'! By this they prepared the ground to establish 'two natures after the union.' If, however, they took the two phrases as meaning the same thing, they should have said, 'Obviously Dioscorus¹ [who confessed "of two natures"] is contentious, and unnecessarily fights about words which have the same meaning.' But they know that from 'of two natures' 'one composite nature' would follow. Since they were striving to avoid 'one incarnate nature of the Word', they accepted 'in two natures.' For the 'of two' denies that they remain two; but it makes it clear that He is one in composition, and that those of which the one has been composed have not been lost; for they are united without confusion. By reason of the excellence of the union, He remains firmly and unchangeably one.

(*To Nephalius*, pp. 11-12)

¹Dioscorus, Patriarch of Alexandria, had been condemned and deposed at Chalcedon.

- 288 To affirm of the one Christ two natures but one Person [*hypostasis*] is contradictory. For he who speaks of one person has of necessity to affirm one nature.¹

(*To Nephalius*, p. 16)

—Severus of Antioch, passages as noted (V.C.S.).

¹ See *Four Important Christological Terms*, 2 and 3.

Some Aspects of Severus' Christology

Jesus was conceived and became man 'inexplicably'

- 289 Before the union and the incarnation, the Word was simple, not incarnate, nor composite. But when He mercifully willed in the dispensation to become man unchangeably along with being what He was, then He was called Christ and Emmanuel—the name being taken from the act—and He became one with us, by reason of the fact that He united to Himself in His Person [*hypostasis*] flesh which was of the same substance with us and which was animated with a rational and intelligent soul.

The flesh did not come into being before, nor had it been formed already; but in the union with Him, it [the flesh] came into being inexplicably, so that conception, growth, gradual development and birth might be of the incarnate Word. On account of the essential union of the flesh, for which it is natural to be conceived and formed, to grow and be born, though He showed it to be beyond the laws of nature because it happened from the Virgin . . . and from the Holy Spirit . . ., he who calls Him *Christ* after the union most certainly signifies Him.

—Severus of Antioch, *Against John the Grammarian*, p. 236 (V.C.S.*).

The Purpose of a Virgin Birth

- 290 It is not to deny either a nature which is the same as ours or passions like our own, that Christ our God and Saviour was in the flesh born of the Holy Spirit and of the ever-Virgin Mary. Neither does it ascribe impurity or defilement of sin to marriage or intercourse between husband and wife. But it is to signify to us, who are born of the Spirit in holy Baptism, that by the washing of regeneration we have been granted the assurance of a rebirth in the resurrection,

consisting in a spiritual birth which He was the first person to receive. Having thus been born for the first time, He became the second Adam for us who are being reshaped and reborn.¹

—Severus of Antioch, *Against Julian*, p. 168. (V.C.S.).

¹ I Corinthians 15 : 22, 45. Compare the 'recapitulation theory' of Irenaeus in 321-323.

The Divine-Human Christ

291 Christ is known to be one from both, which came together into a natural union. He is one *prosopon*, one *hypostasis* and one nature (*physis*) of the Word incarnate, in the same way as man is one, who is made up of body and soul. He is one not by a harmonious association of two persons. That which operates is one, namely God the Word incarnate : He performs the things that befit God as well as the things that befit man, the flesh not being alien to the God-befitting operation. The Word did not work the Divine miracles without being incarnate, neither was the Word external to bodily and human operations and sufferings. For He was incarnate. He who in His nature was without body, became in the dispensation with body, having united to Himself in His Person flesh possessing a rational soul. Therefore in His flesh, which is subject to suffering, He is said to have suffered, ascribing to Himself the passions of the flesh which He united to Himself naturally.

—Severus of Antioch, *Against John the Grammarian*, pp. 286-287 (V.C.S.*).

The Suffering Christ

292 God the Word became incarnate and was made man by uniting to Himself in His Person flesh possessing a rational soul. Therefore, when He endured in reality undeserved suffering of body and soul in the body which was prone to suffer, He continued to be without suffering in the Godhead. So it was not like us who, without wanting to, suffer as men, that he endured passions, but of His own free choice. And again, it is not that He did not suffer, but that He accepted in a real way, without sin, the suffering of humanity.¹

—Severus of Antioch, *Against Julian* (Brit. Mus. MS. 12158), p. 34 (V.C.S.*).

¹ Compare the statement of Narsai in 298 that He suffered 'in love, and not by nature.'

Through Death to Victory

293 It is not because He [God the Word] is incapable of making [the body] all of a sudden immortal and impassible that he let it remain passible and mortal, but because He willed that He should not triumph over death by a forcible exercise of the power that befits God. [He willed] to accept on Himself our battle in [the body], which by nature is really passible. And this He did by mixing power and wisdom, by which we may secure this triumph by a real death and resurrection. In this way, the first Adam who had fallen was restored by the victory of the second Adam.

—Severus of Antioch, *Against Julian* (Brit. Mus. MS. 12158), p. 30 (V.C.S.*).

The Resurrection-Body of Christ

294 The body of Christ, our God and Saviour, did not undergo any difference in essence [*ousia*]. For in essence it was the same both before and after the resurrection. But after the resurrection it gained impassibility and immortality.

—Severus of Antioch, *Against Julian*, 1 : p. 38 (V.C.S.*).

The Rejection of Chalcedon in the Byzantine Empire

From 476 to 519 the Byzantine Empire rejected the Council of Chalcedon; the Church in the Persian Empire, moving towards Nestorianism, considered itself orthodox, and accepted Chalcedon.

The Encyclical of the Emperor Basilikos, 476

295 The proceedings which have disturbed the unity and order of the holy Churches of God, the so-called 'Tome' of Leo, and all things said and done at Chalcedon, . . . we ordain that these shall be anathematised both here and everywhere, . . . and utterly expelled from the one and only Catholic Apostolic Orthodox Church.

—Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3 : 4 (G.E.H.).

The 'Henotikon' of the Emperor Zeno, 482

296 We . . . confess that . . . Our Lord Jesus Christ, who is consubstantial with the Father in respect of the Godhead, and consubstantial with ourselves as respects the manhood, . . . having descended and become incarnate of the Holy Spirit and Mary the Virgin and Mother of God [*Theotokos*], is one, and not two : for we affirm that both His miracles and the sufferings which He voluntarily endured in the flesh are those of a single Person . . . His truly sinless incarnation did not produce the addition of a Son, because the Holy Trinity continued a Trinity even when one member of the Trinity, God the Word, became incarnate . . .

Everyone who has held, or holds, any other opinion, either at the present or another time, whether at Chalcedon or in any synod whatever, we anathematise.

—Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3 : 14 (G.E.H.).

The Confession of Aqaq, 486

This, the first official Confession of the Church of the East, is orthodox, but framed in such a way that a Nestorian could accept it. Part only is quoted.

297 Concerning the incarnation [literally 'dispensation'] of Christ, our faith ought to be in the confession of two natures of Godhead and manhood ; and let no one venture to introduce mixture, confusion or commixture into the diversities of these two natures, seeing that the Godhead remains unchanged in its own characteristics, and the humanity in its own ; and we join the diversities of the two natures in one Majesty and adoration, because of the perfect and inseparable union that existed between the Godhead and the manhood.

If anyone thinks, or teaches others, that suffering or change can attach themselves to the Godhead of the Lord, or if he does not keep to the confession of perfect God and perfect Man in the unity of the Person [*parsopa*] of our Redeemer, let him be anathema.

—*Acts of Council of Aqaq*, 486 (Wigram, H.A.C.).

The Faith of a Nestorian Scholar-Poet, c. 500

In 489 the Byzantine authorities closed the Theological School at Edessa. A new school was set up at Nisibin, and Narsai was its first Head. He was a Syriac poet, and his teaching shows the strong convictions that lay behind the Nestorian point of view. Much of it is simply a repetition of the arguments of Theodore of Mopsuestia.

- 298 When then was come the fulness of appointed time,
 God sent His Son, to come and renew our creation
 He came to us mortals, to renew the image defaced,
 And of our fallen nature made Him a temple and dwelt
 in it . . .
 As soul and body together are called one person,
 The soul the immortal nature, the body the mortal,
 And they are called one person [*parsopa*], these distinct two ;
 So with the Word, Essential Being, and the body and nature
 of man,
 The one created, the other Creator, they are one in union.
 The soul is enclosed in the body, yet its activity is without
 the body ;
 The body is in one place, the motions of the soul are un-
 confined ;
 So the Word dwelt in the body, and was in the height and
 depth,
 His manhood was limited, His Godhead was everywhere.
 The soul suffers not in the body, when its limbs are
 scourged,
 And the Godhead suffered not, when that body suffered in
 which It dwelt.
 If the soul suffers not, which is created, like the body,
 How should Godhead suffer, that is by nature impassible ?
 The soul suffers with the body, in love, and not by nature,
 And the sufferings of the body are by figure attributed to the
 soul.

—Narsai, *Discourse*, 40 and 70 (Wigram, *H.A.C.*).

The Faith of a Monophysite Martyr, c. 520

The Arab Christians were Monophysites, and their favourite address in prayer was ' Christ, God ' (see 408). For these simple people, this involved a denial of the humanity of Christ—but it was a faith they were prepared to die for.

299 [And Habsa the free-born woman answered her persecutors]:

‘ You must know that not only will I not say that Christ was a man, but I worship Him and praise Him because of all the benefits He has shown me. And I believe that He is God, Maker of all creatures, and I take refuge in His Cross.’

—*The Book of the Himyarites*, pp. 33b-34a (Moberg*).

The Faith of Philoxenus of Mabbog, c. 520

In the same year as the probable date of the martyrdom of the Himyarites, a martyr of a different sort died in Syria. He was Philoxenus of Mabbog, imprisoned on a charge of being a Monophysite, who died of his sufferings in prison in 523. He is similar in theological emphasis in many ways to his contemporary Severus of Antioch, but he linked the incarnation of Christ with the new creation of man in a different way.

300 He who is God by nature became really man, and in Himself He created the nature of man anew.¹ Formerly man had been made, that is formed, outside of God. For He said ‘ Let us make man in our image ’ [Gen. 1 : 26], and again ‘ And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul ’ [Gen. 2 : 7]. It is obvious that [this happened] outside the personality [*qmuna*] of God. Now, however, it is not so ; but in God Himself the nature of man is created anew.

—Philoxenus of Mabbog, *Essay on the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten*, p. 38 (Syriac in C.S.C.O. 3 : 9. V.C.S.).

¹ Compare Athanasius on the Incarnation and Atonement, 324.

Yaqub Burd'ana and the Jacobites, Sixth Century

Yaqub Burd'ana (Jacob Bardaeus) was a native of Tella, in the Persian Empire between Edessa and Nisibin. He was a monk, went to Constantinople in 528, and from 543 till his death in 578 he travelled about in Arabia, Syria, and elsewhere, spreading ‘ Monophysite ’ doctrines and establishing ‘ Monophysite ’ Churches. Because of his outstanding work for it, the non-Chalcedonian Church came to be known commonly in the East as the Jacobite Church. The Churches in Arabia and Ethiopia

became 'Monophysite', while the Egyptian Church became predominantly so. The Armenian Church also rejected Chalcedon.

The Emperor Justinian and the Condemnation of Theodore, 553

With the accession of the orthodox Emperor Justinian (527-565) there was a last chance of reconciliation between the Church of the Byzantine Empire and the Church of the East. But in a vain attempt to conciliate the 'Monophysites', Justinian issued a decree anathematising Theodore of Mopsuestia and two others. This made the breach between the two Churches final.

301 We condemn and anathematise, with all other heretics, . . . Theodore who was Bishop of Mopsuestia and his impious writings, and also those things which Theodoret [Bishop of Cyrrhus north-east of Antioch, 423-458] impiously wrote against . . . the holy Cyril, and . . . in defence of Theodore and Nestorius. In addition to these, we also anathematise the impious epistle which Ibas [Ihiba, Bishop of Edessa 435-457] is said to have written to Mari the Persian, which denied that God the Word was incarnate of the holy God-bearer and ever-Virgin Mary, and accuses Cyril of holy memory, who taught the truth, of being a heretic . . .

We therefore anathematise the Three Chapters above-mentioned, together with [all those who] attempt to defend their impiety with the names of the holy Fathers or of the holy Council of Chalcedon.

—*Edict of Justinian, 553* (Latin in Mansi, *Concilia* 9: 367. Ayer, *Source-Book*, pp. 551-552).

Persecution of the Jacobites in the Byzantine Empire

During the late Sixth and early Seventh Centuries the Byzantine Emperors persecuted the Jacobites severely in both Egypt and Syria. Their hatred of their rulers grew so great that when the Muslims conquered Syria in 634 and Egypt in 642 the Jacobites welcomed them as liberators.

The Confession of the Eastern Assembly of Bishops, 612

A determined effort was made by the Jacobites, who had managed to bring Shirin, the Christian wife of Khusrau II, to their way of thinking, to become the officially recognised Church of the Persian Empire. The King refused to appoint a new Patriarch from 608 to 628; but an Assembly of Bishops met in 612, and adopted a specifically 'Nestorian' Confession of Faith, thereby finally going out of communion with the Greek Church. The following is the main part of the Confession.

302 For us men and for our salvation, the Son of God, the Word, came into the world without removing from His Father, and was in the world, that yet was made by His hands. And, because it is not possible for created natures to see the glorious nature of the Godhead, He formed for himself, in a wonderful way, a temple from the very nature of the race of Adam, from the Virgin Mary. That temple was fashioned without human intercourse in the order of nature, and He clothed Himself with it, and united Himself with it, and in it revealed Himself to the world . . .

Because of the wonderful connection and inseparable union that there was, from the first moment of conception, between the human nature that was assumed, and God the Word who assumed it, we are taught henceforward to recognise one Person [*parsopa*] of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Begotten of His Father in the nature of His Godhead without beginning, before the world was, and born of the holy Virgin, the daughter of David, in the nature of His manhood, in these last days . . .

If Godhead be changed, it is not a revelation, but an alteration of Godhead; and if manhood be taken out of its nature, it is not the redemption, but the destruction, of manhood. That is why we believe with our heart and confess with our lips one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whose Godhead was not concealed, neither was His manhood spirited away, but who is Perfect God and Perfect Man.

When we call Christ 'Perfect God', we do not mean the Trinity, but one of the Persons [*Qnumi*]¹ of the Trinity, God the Word. And when we call Christ 'Perfect Man',

¹ Note the ambiguous use of *qnuma* to mean both Person and nature. This led to accusations that the Nestorians believed in Four Persons, not in a Trinity. For the reason for this misunderstanding, see above p. 201, under *Four Important Theological Terms*.

we do not mean all men, but that one nature [*qnuma*]¹ that was visibly taken for our salvation into unity with God the Word . . .

And we are taught clearly that His manhood ascended into heaven, and that the nature [*qnuma*]¹ of His manhood was not dissolved or changed, but that it abides in inseparable unity with His Godhead, in the supreme glory ; and in it He shall appear, in His last manifestation from heaven, to shame those that crucified Him, and to the glory of those that believe in Him.

—*Confession of 612* (French in Chabot, *S.O.* p. 582. Wigram, *H.A.C.*).

By the time of the Muslim conquest of the Persian Empire in 652, the Monophysites were a state-recognised, but minority, Christian Church there. The main Church was Nestorian.

Chinese Teaching about the Incarnation, 781

The following brief account of the incarnation in Chinese shows a Nestorian emphasis in speaking of Christ as a 'divided Person.'

03 The divided Person of our Three in One, the brilliant and reverend Messiah, veiling and hiding His true majesty, came to earth in the likeness of man. An angel proclaimed the good news ; a virgin gave birth to the sage in Syria.¹ A bright star told of good fortune ; Persians saw its glory and came to offer gifts.

—*The Christian Monument at Ch'ang-an*, (Moule, *C.C.*).

¹ The Chinese term is wide enough to include Palestine.

5. 'I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT'

The existence of the Holy Spirit, as the One who inspired the Prophets and gave gifts to the Church, was on the whole accepted by the Church during the first three centuries without much controversy or doctrinal development. It is clear, however, from the *Creed of Ulfilas* (see 260) that the Arians thought of the Spirit as a Power, much inferior to God the Father. This was also the teaching of Macedonius, condemned as heresy by the Council of Constantinople in 381. It was Basil the Great (c. 330-379, see 81-82) who developed the doctrine of the Spirit as Third Person of the Trinity.

The Holy Spirit as 'Mother'

The word 'Spirit' in Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic is feminine. It was therefore easy for a Syriac-speaking Church to think of the Spirit as a Mother. This symbolic use of 'Mother' is not heretical, but could be misunderstood. (Compare the Muslim impression that Christians worshipped Three Gods: God, Jesus, and the Mother of Jesus—*Qur'an*, Surah 5: 116.)

- 304 We have read in the Law: 'A man shall leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh' [Genesis 2: 24]. That is indeed a great and important prophecy. But who actually leaves his [human] father and mother when he takes a wife? The meaning is this: As long as a man is unmarried, he loves and honours God his Father, and the Holy Spirit his Mother,¹ and he has no other affection. But when a man gets married, he leaves his Father and his Mother—I mean to say the ones mentioned above—and his spirit is gripped by this world. His mind and heart and thoughts are dragged away from God into the midst of the world, and he loves and cherishes it, as man loves the wife of his youth, and his love of her is different from his love of his Father and of his Mother.²

—Afrahat, *Demonstration*, 18: 10 (Labourt C.E.P. p. 34, and Burkitt, E.E.C. p. 89).

¹ For a similar use of the term 'Mother', see 13.

² For a contrast to this negative attitude to Christian marriage, in the Church of the East, see 418.

Basil the Great on the Holy Spirit

By a careful use of prepositions Basil teaches that the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the heart of the Christian, is equal in power and glory with the Father and the Son.

305 In relation to the originate the Spirit is said to be *in* them 'in different portions and in different ways' [Hebrews 1 : 1], while in relation to the Father and the Son it is more consistent with true religion to assert Him not to be *in*, but *with*. For the grace flowing from Him when He dwells in those who are worthy, and carries out His own operations, is well described as existing *in* those who are able to receive Him. On the other hand, His essential existence before the ages, and His ceaseless abiding with Son and Father, cannot be contemplated without requiring titles which express eternal conjunction . . .

The word *with* is more expressive, suggesting, as it does, the idea of inseparable fellowship. Where on the other hand the grace flowing from the Spirit naturally comes and goes, it is properly said to exist *in*, even if on account of the disposition to good of those who received Him, His grace abides with them continually. Thus whenever we have in mind the Spirit's proper rank, we think of Him as being *with* the Father and the Son, but when we think of the grace that flows from Him operating on those who participate in it, we say that the Spirit is *in* us.

—Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 63. P.G. 32 : 184 (N. & P.-N.F.*).

In the above passage, Basil is expounding the phrase in the so-called 'Nicene Creed'—'who *with* the Father and Son together is worshipped and together is glorified.' The development of the Doctrine of the Spirit between 325 and 374 can be seen by comparing the Creed of Nicaea, which says simply 'And in the Holy Spirit' with the developed form of the so-called 'Nicene Creed.' Compare 243 and 244.

The Gifts of the Spirit in the Church

It is clear from I Corinthians 14 that the charismatic ministry of prophecy and 'tongues' played a part in the life and worship of the New Testament Church. While healing and exorcism are still frequently mentioned, it is clear that by the middle of the Second Century, with a regular ministry, the Church was putting the emphasis elsewhere.

Justin Martyr, c. 150

Jews who are converted receive, like us, the Gifts of the Spirit.

- 306** For one receives the spirit of understanding, another of counsel, another of strength, another of foreknowledge, another of teaching, and another of the fear of God.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 39 (A.-N.C.L.).

Origen, c. 250

- 307** Paul in the list of spiritual gifts given by God puts first the gift of wisdom, and second, as inferior to that, the word of knowledge, and third, even lower I think, faith. And as he values reason above miraculous workings, on this account he puts 'workings of miracles' and 'gifts of healing' in a lower place than the intellectual gifts [I Corinthians 12 : 8-10]. (3 : 46)

- 308** Signs of the Holy Spirit were manifested at the beginning when Jesus was teaching, and after His ascension there were many more, though later they became less numerous. Nevertheless, even to this day there are traces of Him in a few people whose souls have been purified by the Word and by the actions which follow His teaching. (7 : 8).

—Origen, *Against Celsus*, passages as noted (C.*).

Compare the references to exorcism and healing in 55-57 and the warning of the Didache against false 'apostles' and 'prophets' in 50.

Montanism

Montanism, which began in Phrygia about 157, had several features. It was partly an exaggerated attempt to recover the Gifts of the Spirit in the everyday life of the Church, especially the gift of prophecy. There was also an emphasis on an immediate Second Coming, at a place called Pepuza, in Phrygia, and on asceticism. It was this last emphasis which appealed to Tertullian, who became a Montanist in 207, but of a much more controlled kind.

Sayings of Montanist Leaders

The three leaders of Montanism were Montanus and two women, Priscilla and Maximilla. All claimed the gift of prophecy.

- 309 Behold a man is as a lyre, and I¹ fly over it like a plectrum. The man sleeps, and I remain awake. Behold it is the Lord that stirs the hearts of men, and gives men hearts. (Montanus) (48:4)
- 310 I am the Lord God Almighty,¹ dwelling in man. It is neither angel or ambassador, but I, God the Father, who am come. (Montanus) (48:11)
- 311 After me shall be no prophetess any more, but the consummation. (Maximilla) (48:2)
- 312 The Lord sent me to be the party-leader, informer, interpreter of this task, profession, and covenant, constrained... to learn the knowledge of God. (Maximilla) (48:13)
- 313 Christ came to me in the likeness of a woman, clad in a bright robe, and He planted wisdom in me and revealed that this place [Pepuza] is holy, and that here Jerusalem comes down from heaven. (Priscilla) (49:1)

—Epiphanius, *Heresies*, passages as noted above (Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, p. 69).

¹ i.e. 'I, the Holy Spirit,' not 'I, Montanus'.

The Account of Hippolytus

- 314 There are others, ... heretical¹ in nature, Phrygians by birth. These have been captivated and deceived by wretched women, called a certain Priscilla and Maximilla, whom they supposed prophetesses. And they assert that into these the Paraclete Spirit had departed; and previous to them, they consider in like manner a certain Montanus as a prophet. And being in possession of an infinite number of their books, the Phrygians are deluded... They magnify these wretched women above the Apostles and every gift of grace, so that some of them presume to assert that there is in them something superior to Christ. These acknowledge God to be the Father of the Universe, the Creator of all things, similarly with the Church, and receive as many things as the Gospel testifies concerning Christ. They introduce, however, the novelties of fasts, and feasts, and meals of parched food, and repasts of radishes.

—Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 8:19. 1-2 (A.-N.C.L.-S.).

¹ See below. Their general doctrine was orthodox.

Tertullian's Account of Montanist Visions

315 We have now amongst us a sister whose lot it has been to be favoured with gifts of revelation, which she experiences in the Spirit by ecstatic vision amidst the sacred rites of the Lord's Day in the church ; she converses with angels, and sometimes even with the Lord ; she both sees and hears mysterious communications ; some men's hearts she discerns, and she obtains directions for healing such as need them. Whether it be in the reading of the Scripture, or in the chanting of Psalms, or in the preaching of sermons or in the offering up of prayers, in all these religious service matter and opportunity are offered her of seeing visions.

By chance, while this sister of ours was in the Spirit, we had discoursed on some topic about the soul. After the people are dispersed at the conclusion of the sacred services she is in the regular habit of reporting to us whatever things she may have seen in vision ; for all her communications are examined with the most scrupulous care, in order that their truth may be probed.

' Amongst other things ', she says, ' there was shown to me a soul in bodily shape, and a spirit appeared to me ; not, however, a void and empty illusion, but such as would offer itself to be even grasped by the hand,¹ clear and transparent and of an ethereal colour, and in form resembling that of a human being in every respect.'

This was her vision, and for her witness there was God and the Apostle [Paul] is a fitting surety that there were to be Spiritual Gifts in the Church.

—Tertullian, *On the Soul* 9 (A.-N.C.L.-S.*).

¹ It is clear that Tertullian believed that spirits were not completely without bodies, but had very refined bodies. This view is held by Muslims to-day, and was common among Christians in the Middle Ages.

6. 'THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS'

The Novatianist and Donatist Schisms were over questions of Church discipline rather than points of belief; but they led to development of the Doctrine of the Church, with special emphasis on the importance of unity.

Cyprian on the Church

Cyprian's view was that the Novatians, by their schism, had cut themselves off from the Church altogether.

316 Anyone who is divorced from the Church is associated with an adulteress and no longer heir to the Church's promised inheritance; nor can he who leaves the Church of Christ expect to receive the rewards of which Christ assures us. He has become an alien, an outcast, an enemy. He cannot regard God as his Father who does not regard the Church as his Mother. If anyone excluded from the Ark of Noah was able to escape destruction, then the person who is outside the Church will escape too ! . . .

Let no one allow himself to be deceived by their [Novatianists'] futile exposition of our Lord's words, 'Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.' These corrupters of the Gospel and false expositors expound the final verse of the passage and ignore what has preceded it, . . . namely, the one in which our Lord exhorts His disciples to unity and peace. 'I tell you,' He says, 'that if any two of you agree on earth about any request, it shall be granted you by my Father who is in heaven. For wherever two or three . . . [Matthew 18 : 19-20]. His point is that most value attaches not to the number of those praying, but to their unanimity . . .

But how can the man who does not agree with the body of the Church itself and the universal brotherhood, agree with anyone else? How can two or three gather together in the name of Christ when they are clearly separated from Christ and His Gospel? We did not secede from them, but they seceded from us and abandoned the fountain-head of truth. This is proved by the fact that heresies and schisms are of

later origin than the Church and go together with the formation of congregations separated from it.

—Cyprian, *On Unity* 6 and 12 (Garrett).

For the views of the Eastern Patriarch Ishu'-Yab III, that schism involves cutting off oneself from the Apostolic source of spiritual power, see 437-440.

Augustine on the Church, the Body of Christ

Augustine in his teaching holds two conceptions in a kind of tension—the ideal, that the true Church is the Body of Christ, and the fact, that on earth the Church is a mixture of wheat and tares. He is not entirely consistent.

The Body of Christ on Earth

According to Augustine, Christ has three modes of existence—as the eternal Word, as the Mediator, and as the Church, of which He is the Head and believers the limbs. The limbs must be united, because they belong to the one body. In practice he tends to identify the Body of Christ in Earth with the Catholic Church. Schism is therefore a sin against Christ, the sin of dividing His Body.

- 317 There are many Christians, but only one Christ. The Christians themselves along with their Head, because He has ascended to heaven, form one Christ. It is not a case of His being one and our being many, but we who are many are a unity in Him. There is therefore one man, Christ, consisting of Head and Body.

—Augustine, *On Psalm 127*. 3 (Kelly, *E.C.D.*).

The Mixture of Wheat and Tares

The following passage, written in controversy with those who believed that Christ would literally reign for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4) gives the other side of Augustine's teaching.

- 318 We must show the right way of taking this passage . . . It puts a thousand years for all the years of this age, that by a perfect number the very fulness of the time may be marked, for a thousand is the cube of ten . . .

This binding of the Devil [Revelation 20 : 2] is done, not only from the time when the Church began to expand beyond the land of Judaea to other and still other nations. It goes on still, and shall do to the end of the age, when the Devil is to be loosed [verse 7]. For now too there are men who turn to the Faith from that faithlessness in which the Devil held them, and doubtless it shall be so to the world's end . . . While the Devil is bound for a thousand years, the saints are reigning with Christ for a thousand years. Both are doubtless to be understood in the same way, that is from the time of His first Advent . . . For it cannot mean that Kingdom of which it is said, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you'¹ [Matthew 25 : 34]. There must be another Kingdom far different, where in a different way, His saints now reign with Him, even as He told them, 'Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world' [Matthew 28 : 20]. If it were not so, the Church could not now be called the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven. And from the Church the reapers shall gather the tares, which He allowed to grow with the wheat until the harvest . . . 'The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that cause stumbling' [Matthew 13 : 41]. Can this concern that Kingdom where there is nothing to offend? No. From this Kingdom of His which is the Church, shall they be gathered . . .

And so, where both sorts are means the Church as it now is; but where one only, the Church as it shall be, when in it there shall be no one evil. Therefore even now is the Church the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of Heaven. And His saints now reign with Him, but not as they then shall reign. As for the tares, they do not reign with Him at all, though in the Church they grow along with the wheat.

—Augustine, *The City of God* 20 : 7-9 (W.T.C.).

¹ i.e. it cannot mean Heaven itself, at the end of the world.

For another aspect of Augustine's teaching on the Church, see 413.

Niceta of Remesiana on the Communion of Saints

Niceta, Bishop of Remesiana, and author of the *Te Deum* (see 150), is expounding the last section of the Creed. He is writing about 375.

319 After confessing the Blessed Trinity, you go on to profess that you believe in 'the Holy Catholic Church.' What else is the Church than the congregation of all saints? From the beginning of the world, be it Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs or all other just men, who have been, are, or shall be—all are one Church because they are sanctified by one Faith and life, sealed by one Spirit, made one Body; of which Body the Head is held to be Christ, as indeed it is written [Ephesians 4 : 15].

I go further. Even Angels, virtues and powers of the higher region are united in this one Church; for the Apostle teaches that in Christ all things are reconciled, whether things on earth or things in heaven [Colossians 1 : 20]. So in this one Church you believe that you are to attain 'the Communion of Saints.'

You must know that this one Church is ordered throughout the whole world, and to its communion you ought to adhere firmly. There are, indeed, other false 'churches', but you have nothing in common with them, as, for example, 'churches' of Manichaeans, Montanists, Marcionites, and other heretics or schismatics. For they have ceased to be Holy Churches, because they have been deceived by doctrines of demons, and both believe and do otherwise than is required by the commands of Christ and the Tradition of the Apostles.

—Niceta of Remesiana, *On the Creed* 10 (K. 2*).

Niceta of Remesiana on the Communion of Saints
 Niceta, Bishop of Remesiana, and author of the *Te Dium*
 (see 150), is expanding the last section of the Creed. He is
 writing about 375.

7. 'THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS'

This can be looked on from two sides—how Christ atones, and how man receives salvation. The Biblical pictures of the Atonement are so many-sided that one-sided theories of the Atonement have never been considered heresies. On how man receives salvation, the main heresy of the period was that of Pelagius.

How Christ Atones

The key to Patristic theories of the Atonement is said by Kelly to be the thought of Christ as our Representative, restoring fallen man and lifting him up to fellowship with God. But there is a difference of emphasis between Greek and Latin Fathers:

1. The Greek attitude was Incarnation-centred, and saw it as the life of God gushing in upon fallen humanity.
2. The Latin attitude was Passion-centred, and saw it as the way through which man was ransomed and forgiven.

Some Greek Fathers

The following statement of Justin Martyr (c. 140) is simple and essentially Biblical:

320 The Father of the universe willed that His own Christ should take on Himself the curses of all on behalf of men from every race, knowing that when He had been crucified and had died He would raise Him up . . . The Father willed Him to suffer in this way, so that 'healing by His stripe' [Isaiah 53 : 5] should come to the human race . . .

If . . . you repent for your sinful acts, and recognise that this is the Christ, and observe His commandments . . . forgiveness of your sins will be yours.

—Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 95 (Hanson*).

Irenaeus was from Asia Minor, and wrote in Greek, though he was a missionary in Gaul. His statement is known as the 'Recapitulation Theory.' (Compare also **290** and **293**).

321 The Word which exists from the beginning with God, by whom all things were made, who was also present with the

race of men at all times—this Word has in these last times, according to the time appointed by the Father, been united to His own workmanship and has been made passible man . . . When He was incarnate and made man, He recapitulated [summed up] in Himself the long line of the human race, procuring for us salvation thus summarily [by summing up], so that what we had lost in Adam, that is, being in the image and likeness of God, that we should regain in Christ Jesus. (3 : 18)

322 This is why the Lord declares Himself to be the Son of Man, because He recapitulates [sums up] in Himself the original man who was the source from which sprang the race fashioned after woman ; that as through the conquest of man our race went down to death, so through the victory of man we might ascend to life. (5 : 20)

323 He came to save all through Himself ; all, that is, who through Him are born into God, infants, children, boys, young men, and old. Therefore He passed through every stage of life. And then He came even unto death that He might be the 'firstborn from the dead, holding the pre-eminence among all' [Colossians 1 : 18], the Prince of Life, before all and preceding all. (2 : 22)

—Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, passages as noted (B.)

But it is *Athanasius* who is the most outstanding of the Greek writers on the Atonement. The result of the Fall, he says, was corruption, and loss of the image of God. It was to bring back that image that Christ came.

324 None other could restore a corruptible being to incorruption but the Saviour who in the beginning made everything out of nothing.¹ None other could recreate man according to the image, but He who is the Father's 'image' [Hebrews 1 : 3]. None other could make a mortal being immortal, but He who is life itself, our Lord Jesus Christ. (On the Incarnation 20)

¹ Compare 255.

325 By becoming man He made us sons to the Father, and He made men God¹ by Himself becoming man.
(*Against Arius* 1 : 38)

326 The Word became man so that we might become God.
(*On the Incarnation* 54)

Man was corrupt, and liable to death ; Jesus died to pay this debt of death, that man might live and be immortal.

327 It still remained [after the Incarnation] to pay the debt which all owed, since all . . . were doomed to death, and this was the chief cause of His coming among us. That is why, after revealing His Godhead by His works, it remained for Him to offer the sacrifice for all, handing over the temple of His body to death for all, so that He might rescue and deliver them from their liability for the ancient transgression, and might show Himself superior to death, revealing His own body as immortal as a foretaste of the incorruption of all . . . because both the death of all was fulfilled in the Lord's body, and death and corruption were annihilated because of the Word who indwelt it. For there was need of death, and a death had to be undergone for all, so that the debt of all might be discharged.
(*On the Incarnation* 20)

Salvation through Christ is made available to man through the receiving of the Spirit of God.

328 This is God's loving-kindness to men, that by grace He becomes the Father of those whose Creator He already is. This comes about when created men, as the Apostle says [Galatians 4 : 6], receive the Spirit of His Son, crying 'Abba, Father', in their hearts. It is those who, receiving the Spirit, have obtained power from Him to become God's children. Being creatures by nature, they would never have become sons if they had not received the Spirit from Him who is true Son by nature.
(*Against Arius* 2 : 59)

329 The Word became flesh in order both to offer this sacrifice and that we, participating in His Spirit, might become God.
(*On the Nicene Decrees* 14)

—Athanasius, passages as noted (Kelly, *E.C.D.**).

¹ Kelly translates, here and in the other places where the phrase occurs, by 'deified'. I have retained 'made God', 'become God', as expressing more clearly the bold language of the antitheses.

A Chinese Writer

The expression of Athanasius—'handing over the temple of His body to death'—should be compared with the use of the imagery of the temple in Theodore of Mopsuestia (see 268-269). It is echoed in an Eighth Century Chinese writing.

- 330 Messiah took His body and gave it to evil men for all living beings, to cause the men of the world to know that man's life is like a flickering candle. Offering His life as a substitute to be put to death for all the living beings of the present world, Messiah took and gave His own body, and was then put to death.

—*The Book of Jesus Christ* (Moule, C.C.).

Two Latin Fathers

Ambrose puts forward a substitutionary view of the Atonement, which in some ways anticipates the later teaching of Anselm (c. 1033-1109).

- 331 Jesus took flesh so as to abolish the curse of sinful flesh, and was made a curse in our stead so that the curse might be swallowed up in blessing . . . He took death, too, upon Himself that the sentence might be carried out, so that he might satisfy the judgment that sinful flesh should be cursed even unto death. So nothing was done contrary to God's sentence, since its terms were implemented.

(*On Fleeing from the World*, 44)

- 332 Since the Divine decree cannot be broken, the person punished might be changed, not the sentence of punishment.

(*On Luke 4 - 7*)

—Ambrose, passages as noted. (Kelly, E.C.D.)

Augustine saw many sides to Christ's work, including a victory over the Devil through Christ's death and resurrection.

- 333 We could never have been delivered even by the one Mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ [I Timothy 2 : 5], had He not been God as well. When Adam was created, he was, of course, righteous, and a Mediator was not needed. But when sin placed a wide gulf between mankind and God, a Mediator was called for, who

was unique in being born, in living and being slain without sin, in order that we might be reconciled to God and brought by the resurrection of the flesh to eternal life. Thus through God's humility human pride was rebuked and healed, and man was shown how far he had departed from God, since the Incarnation of God was required for his restoration. Moreover, an example of obedience was given by the God-man; and the Only-begotten having taken the form of a servant [Philippians 2:7], which previously had done nothing to deserve it, a fountain of grace was opened, and in the Redeemer Himself the resurrection of the flesh promised to the redeemed was enacted by anticipation. The Devil was vanquished in that selfsame nature which he gleefully supposed he had deceived.

—Augustine, *Manual on Faith, Hope and Love* 108 (Kelly, E.C.D.).

How Man Receives Salvation

The Heresy of Pelagius

Augustine quotes the following statement on freewill by Pelagius (c. 360-420).

- 334 We distinguish three things and arrange them in a definite order: firstly we put the *ability to do*, secondly the *wish to do*, and thirdly the *actual doing* of the deed. The *ability* we assign to nature, the *wish* to will, the *doing* to real performance. The first of these, the *ability to do*, is correctly ascribed to God, who conferred it on His creatures; the other two, the *wish to do* and the *actual doing*, are to be referred to the human agent, since they have their source in his will. Therefore a man deserves to be given credit for wishing to do and doing a good work; or rather, this credit belongs both to man and God, who has granted the ability to wish and to do, and who by the help of His grace always assists this very ability. . . . When we say that a man is able to be without sin, we are even then giving credit to God by acknowledging the gift of ability which we have received. He it is that bestowed this *ability* on us, and there is no reason why we should give credit to the human agent when we are treating of God alone, for the question is not about *wishing* or *doing*, but solely about the ability.

—Augustine, *On the Grace of Christ* (*).

In another work against the Pelagians, Augustine lists the following statements by Caelestius, a follower of Pelagius.

- 335** Adam was created mortal, and he would have died, whether he sinned or not.

Adam's sin injured himself alone, not the human race.

The Law, as well as the Gospel, leads to the Kingdom.

There were men without sin before Christ's coming.

New-born infants are in the same condition as Adam before the Fall.

It is not through the death or the Fall of Adam that the whole human race dies, nor through the Resurrection of Christ that the whole human race rises again . . .

A man can be without sin, if he choose.

Infants, even if unbaptised, have eternal life.

—Augustine, *On the Acts of Pelagius* 23 (B.).

For the teaching of Bardaisan on Freewill, see **115**.

The Teaching of Augustine

The following passages from Augustine, dated respectively 412, 427, 427 and 428, show how he developed the doctrine of Predestination in opposition to Pelagianism.

- 336** We for our part assert that the human will is so Divinely aided towards the doing of righteousness that, besides being created with the free choice of his will, and besides the teaching which instructs him how he ought to live, he receives also the Holy Spirit, through which there arises in his heart a delight in, and a love of, that supreme and unchangeable God which is God ; and this arises even now, while he still walks by faith and not by sight [II Corinthians 5 : 7] . . . A man's free choice avails only to lead him to sin.

—Augustine, *The Spirit and the Letter* 5 (B.).

- 337** If . . . you agree with us in supposing that we are doing our duty in praying to God, as our custom is, for them that refuse to believe, that they may be willing and believe, and for those that resist and oppose this law and doctrine, that they may believe and follow it, [and] in giving thanks to God,

as is our custom, for such people when they are converted, . . . then you are surely bound to admit that the wills of men are *prevented* [set going] by the grace of God, and that it is God who makes them to will the good which they refused ; for it is God whom we ask so to do, and we know that it is meet and right to give thanks to Him for so doing.

—Augustine, *Letter* 217 (B.).

- 338 To the saints, . . . who are predestinated to the Kingdom of God by the grace of God, the aid of perseverance which is given is . . . that kind which brings the gift of actual perseverance, . . . by means of which they cannot but persevere. . . . Since they will not in fact persevere unless they both *can* and *will*, . . . their will is so kindled by the Holy Spirit that they *can*, just because they *will*, and they *will*, just because *God works in them so to will* . . . For them that were weak He reserved His own gift whereby they should most irresistibly will what is good, and most irresistibly refuse to forsake it.

—Augustine, *On Irresistible Grace* 34 and 38 (B.).

- 339 Will any man presume to say that God did not foreknow those to whom he would grant belief? And if He foreknew this, then He certainly foreknew His own kindness, with which He vouchsafes to deliver us. This, and nothing but this, is the predestination of saints ; namely, the foreknowledge and planning of God's kindnesses, by which they are most surely delivered, whoever are delivered. As for the rest, where are they left by God's righteous judgment save in the mass of perdition where they of Tyre and Sidon were left? And they, moreover, would have believed, had they seen the wondrous miracles of Christ [Matthew 11:21] . . . But their capacity for belief availed them nothing, because they were not so predestinated by Him whose judgments are inscrutable and whose ways past finding out.

—Augustine, *The Gift of Perseverance* 35 (B.).

8. 'THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING'

Over-Emphasis on the Spiritual

Heresy usually took the form of a denial that there was a resurrection-body. Bede speaks of a heresy of this kind about 600 in Constantinople, which was opposed by Pope Gregory the Great.

- 340 It was during his stay at Constantinople that Gregory, a mighty champion of Catholic truth, suppressed at its birth a new heresy about our state at the resurrection. For Eutyches,¹ Bishop of that city, taught that our bodies will then be impalpable, more intangible than wind and air: but when Gregory heard this, he quoted the example of our Lord's Resurrection, and showed logically how this opinion was utterly opposed to the orthodox belief. For the Catholic belief is that the body is transfigured in the glory of immortality and refined by the operation of spiritual power, but remains palpable by reason of its nature. This is exemplified in our Lord's risen body, of which He said: 'Touch me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones as you see me have' [Luke 24 : 39]. In defence of the Faith, our venerable father Gregory contested this rising heresy so effectively that... it was entirely suppressed, and no one has since been found to revive it.

—Bede, *History of the English Church and People*, 2 : 1 (L.S.-P.).

- ¹ Not, of course, Eutyches the Monophysite.

For the Gnostic teaching that 'salvation belongs to the soul alone' see 251-252.

Over-Emphasis on the Material

The opposite extreme, the material millenarianism of Nepos, was a minor heresy confined to Egypt. The story of how Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, dealt with it, however, is a most attractive one, and a model of what ought to have been done more often.

- 341 They put forward a treatise by Nepos, on which they rely completely as proving incontrovertibly that Christ's

Kingdom will be on earth. Now in general I respect and love Nepos for his faith and industry, his careful study of the Scriptures, and his rich hymnody, which is still a source of comfort to many of our fellow-Christians; and I am most unwilling to criticise him, especially now that he has gone to his rest. But more than anything we must love and reverence truth, and while it is right to give ungrudging praise and approval to every statement that is correct, it is our duty to examine and criticise any piece of writing that appears unsound. If Nepos were here now and putting forward his ideas in speech alone, conversation with nothing in writing would suffice, using question and answer as means to persuade and win over our militant opponents. But a work has been published which some people find most convincing, and certain teachers... make extravagant claims for the teaching of this treatise as if it was some great and hidden mystery. They do not allow our simpler brethren to have lofty noble thoughts... about our own resurrection from the dead; they persuade them to expect in the Kingdom of God what is trifling and mortal and like the present. How then can we do otherwise than thrash the matter out as if our brother Nepos were here with us?

This he does in the book from which Eusebius is quoting. But he also speaks of how he tackled the problem personally in one of the districts of his province.

When I arrived in the district of Arsinoe [Fayyum], where as you know this notion had long been widely held, so that schisms and secessions of entire churches had taken place, I called a meeting of the presbyters and teachers of the village congregations, with any layman who wished to attend, and urged them to thrash out the question in public. So they brought me this book as positive and irrefutable proof, and I sat with them for three days on end from dawn to dusk, criticising its contents point by point. In the process I was immensely impressed by the essential soundness, complete sincerity, logical grasp, and mental clarity shown by these good people, as we methodically and good-temperedly dealt with questions, objections, and points of agreement. We refused to cling with pig-headed determination to opinions once held even if proved wrong. There was no shirking of difficulties, but to the limit of our powers we tried to grapple with the problems and master them; nor were we too proud, if worsted

and in argument, to abandon our position and admit defeat : conscientiously, honestly, and with simple-minded trust in God, we accepted the conclusions to be drawn from the proofs and teachings of Holy Writ. In the end, the author and originator of this doctrine, Coracion by name, in the hearing of all present assured and promised me that for the future he would not adhere to it, argue about it, mention it, or teach it, as he was completely convinced by the arguments on the other side. Of the rest, some were delighted with the discussion, and with the all-round spirit of accommodation and concord.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 7 : 24 (W.)

For Augustine's reply to those who taught a literal Millennium, see 318.

For Dionysius's escape during the Decian persecution, see 355.

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A. THE CHURCH AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Acts 21 shows that there was a Church in Jerusalem in 57, under the leadership of James the brother of Jesus, which kept the Jewish Law strictly, and was tolerated by the Jewish community. But this was not to last much longer.

The Martyrdom of James, 62

342 Caesar sent Albinus to Judaea as Procurator, when he was informed of the death of Festus. But the younger Annanus, who as I said had received the High Priesthood, was headstrong in character and audacious in the extreme. . . . Annanus thought that he had a convenient opportunity, as Festus was dead and Albinus still on the way. So he assembled a council of judges and brought before it James, the brother of Jesus, known as Christ, and several others, on a charge of breaking the Law, and handed them over to be stoned.

V. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

The Christians leave Jerusalem, c. 66

343 The members of the Jerusalem Church, by means of an oracle given by revelation to acceptable persons there [compare Luke 21: 20-24 and Mark 13: 14], were ordered to leave the City before the war began and settle in a town in Perea called Betsa. To Pella those who believed in Christ migrated from Jerusalem; and as it holy men had utterly abandoned the royal metropolis of the Jews and the entire Jewish land, the judgment of God at last overtook them for their abominable crimes against Christ and His Apostles, completely blotting out that wicked generation from among men.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3: 5, 2 (W.).

Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in 70. The separate Jewish Church soon ceased to exist. Jerusalem was again to become a Church centre, but the Church was Greek-speaking. Relations between Jews and Christians after this were usually bad (see 250, 280, 408), but friendly relations with individual Jews were sometimes possible (see 40, 301). Between 70 and 135 the Jews took various steps to exclude Jewish Christians from their Synagogues.

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—Josephus, *Antiquities* 20 : 9. 1, quoted in Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2 : 23 (W.).

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B. CHURCH AND STATE IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

1. THE PAGAN ROMAN EMPIRE, UP TO 313

Persecution under Nero, 64-68

There was popular dislike of Christians in Rome, but Nero's persecution arose from the Emperor's character, and not from any settled state policy.

- 344 To get rid of the report [that he had set fire to Rome], Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate, and a deadly superstition, thus checked for a moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but also in the City [Rome], where all things hidden and shameful from every part of the world meet and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who confessed; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of arson, as of hatred of the human race.¹ Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames. These served to illuminate the night when daylight failed. Nero had thrown open his gardens for the spectacle... Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed.

—Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44-2-8 (Church and Broadribb—S.).

¹i.e. they were accused of being anti-social, not conforming to the customs of the people. Compare Tertullian's reply to this charge in 414.

Tacitus wrote his *Annals* fifty years after Nero's persecution. Clement of Rome, writing about 96, speaks of both Peter and Paul as 'having borne witness', and of 'a great multitude of the elect' who 'suffered many indignities and tortures', including women, who were 'made to endure dreadful and unholy insults... and won the true prize, weak in body though they were'. Eusebius says definitely that Peter and Paul suffered under Nero.

- 345 This man [Nero], the first to be heralded as a conspicuous fighter against God, was led on to murder the Apostles. It is recorded that in his reign Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified, and the record is confirmed by the fact that the cemeteries there are still called by the names of Peter and Paul.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 2: 25. 5-6 (W.).

Pliny's Letter and the Emperor Trajan's Reply, c. 112

Pliny, Governor of Bythnia, wrote to the Emperor Trajan for advice about how to treat those accused of being Christians. The emperor's reply set the pattern of Empire's official attitude to Christians up to 250.

Pliny's Letter

- 346 It is my custom, my Lord Emperor, to refer to you all questions about which I am in doubt. . . . I have never taken part in investigations of Christians; hence I do not know what is the crime usually punished or investigated, or what allowances are made. I am therefore not at all certain whether there is any distinction of age, or whether the very weakest offenders are treated exactly like the stronger; whether pardon is given to those who recant; . . . whether punishment is due for the mere name apart from secret crimes, or to the secret crimes connected with the name. Meantime, this is the course I have taken with those who were accused before me as Christians. I asked them whether they were Christians, and if they confessed, I asked them a second and third time with threats of punishment. If they kept to it, I ordered them to be executed, for I had no doubt that . . . obstinacy and unbending perversity deserve to be punished. . . .

Before long . . . an unsigned paper was presented, which gave the names of many people. Those who said that they neither were nor ever had been Christians I thought it right to release, since they recited a prayer to the gods at my dictation, made supplication with incense and wine to

your statue, . . . and moreover cursed Christ—things which, so it is said, those who are really Christians cannot be made to do.

Others admitted that they had once been Christians, but said that they were not so now.

They maintained, however, that their fault or error had simply amounted to this, that it was their habit on a fixed day to assemble before daylight, and recite by turns a form of words to Christ as a god ; and that they bound themselves with an oath [Latin *sacramentum*—possibly the Lord's Supper], not for any crime, but that they would not commit theft or robbery or adultery, break their word, or deny a deposit when demanded. After this was done, it was their custom to depart (for the day's work), and to meet again to take food, but ordinary and harmless food [the Love-Feast in the evening] ; and even this [they said] they had given up after the issue of my edict, by which in accordance with your commands I had forbidden the existence of clubs.

When I heard this, I considered it all the more necessary to find out from two slave-girls, who were called deaconesses—and that by tortures—how far this was true ; but I discovered nothing more than a perverse and extravagant superstition. I therefore adjourned the case and hastened to consult you.

The matter seemed to me worth considering, especially on account of the numbers of those in danger ; for many of all ages and classes, and also of both sexes, are being put into danger by accusation, and this will go on. The contagion of this superstition has penetrated not only the cities, but also the villages and countryside ; yet it seems possible to check it, and set it right. At any rate it is certain enough that the almost deserted temples are beginning to be frequented once more, that long discarded religious ceremonies are being restored, and that fodder for [sacrificial] victims now finds a market, whereas, till recently, buyers were very few. From this it may easily be imagined what a multitude of men could be reclaimed, if they are given a chance to recant.

—Pliny, *Epistles* 10 : 96 (Gwatkin—S.*).

The Emperor's Reply

- 347 You have adopted the proper course, my dear Pliny, in your examination of the cases of those who were accused to you as being Christians, for no hard and fast rule can be laid down involving something like a set form of procedure. They are not to be sought out; but if they are accused and convicted, they must be punished—yet with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian, and makes the fact plain by his action, that is, by worshipping our gods, shall be pardoned as a result of his recantation, however suspicious his past conduct may be. Papers, however, which are presented unsigned ought not to be admitted as evidence in any charge. They constitute a very bad precedent, and are unworthy of our time.

—Pliny, *Epistles* 10:97 (Gwatkin—S.*).

Appeals for Justice

The Christian Apologists—Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen and many others—wrote answers to the various false accusations made against Christians, and presented Christian faith and practice in a positive way. It is not known whether any Emperor actually received or read these Apologies, or how far they were circulated among non-Christians.

- 348 To the Emperor . . . Antoninus Pius [138-161], . . . and to the sacred Senate, with the whole people of the Romans, I Justin . . . present this address and petition on behalf of those of all nations who are unjustly hated and wantonly abused, myself being one of them. . . . We have come, not to flatter you by this writing, . . . but to beg you to pass judgment, after an accurate and searching investigation, not flattered by prejudice or by a desire to please superstitious men, nor induced by irrational impulse or the evil rumours which have long been prevalent, to give a decision which will prove to be against yourselves. For as for us, we reckon that no evil can be done us, unless we should be convicted as evil-doers, or proved to be wicked men. As for you, you can kill us, but you cannot hurt us. . . . We demand that these charges against the Christians be investigated, and that if they can be proved true, they be punished as they deserve. But if no one can convict us of anything,

[do not] wrong blameless men. . . . If [Christian beliefs and practices] seem nonsensical, despise them as nonsense, but do not decree death against those who have done no wrong.

—Justin Martyr *I Apology*, from 1, 2, 3 and 18 (A.—N.C.L.*).

349 Rulers of the Roman Empire, . . . you cannot, surely, forbid the Truth to reach your ears by the secret pathway of a noiseless Book. . . . Criminals are eager to conceal themselves. . . . They are unwilling to admit that the crime is theirs, because they agree that it is wicked. But what is there like this in the case of the Christian? . . . If he is pointed out, he glories in it; if he is accused, he offers no defence; interrogated, he makes voluntary confession; condemned, he renders thanks. . . . What! is that a crime in which the criminal rejoices? . . . The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of the Christians is seed. . . . As the Divine and the human are always opposed to each other, so when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by the Highest.

—Tertullian, *Apology* 1 and 50 (A.—N.C.L.*).

For Tertullian's reply to the accusation that Christians were anti-social, see **414**. For his references to prayers for the Emperor and the State, see **143**.

The Martyrdom of Polycarp at Smyrna, 156

350 The Church of God . . . at Smyrna, to . . . all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic Church in every place . . . We write to you, brethren, the facts about the martyrs and the blessed Polycarp, who as though setting a seal to it by his martyrdom, brought the persecution to an end . . . Like the Lord he waited to be betrayed . . . We do not approve those who give themselves up, for the Gospel does not teach us to do so.

Polycarp, when the persecution began, went quietly to a farm near the city of Smyrna, but a Christian slave-boy, questioned under torture, revealed his hiding-place. When the police arrived to arrest him, he gave himself up willingly. On his way to the arena he was invited to burn incense to the Emperor, but refused.

As Polycarp entered the arena, there came a voice to him from heaven, 'Be strong, Polycarp, and act like a man.' Nobody saw the one who spoke, but those of our people who were there heard the voice The Governor asked him if he was Polycarp, and when he admitted that he was, he tried to persuade him to deny the Faith, saying to him, 'Have some regard for your age', and so on, as they usually say. 'Swear by the fortune of Caesar; change your mind, and say, "Kill the atheists".'

For the Governor, atheists were those who did not worship the gods. Polycarp willingly shouted 'Kill the atheists!' but he made it clear that his meaning was different.

And when the Governor insisted, saying, 'Take the oath, and I will let you go; revile Christ', Polycarp said,

'For eighty-six years¹ I have been His slave, and He has done me no wrong; how can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?'

In spite of many attempts to persuade him, Polycarp insisted that he was a Christian. The pagans and Jews in Smyrna clamoured for his death, and shouted that he should be burned. The mob collected fuel.

When the pyre was ready, he himself took off all his clothes and unfastened his belt, and tried also to take off his shoes, though he was not in the habit of doing this before, because each of the faithful was always eager to be the first to touch his flesh. For because of his excellent life he had been treated even before his martyrdom with the utmost consideration.

They wanted to nail him to the pyre.

He said, 'Leave me as I am, for He who enables me to endure the fire will also enable me to stay on the pyre without moving . . .' So they did not nail him, but tied him.

After Polycarp had prayed, the fire was lit, but it was slow to consume him, and ultimately he was slain by an executioner's dagger. His body was afterwards burned, but some of his bones were retrieved by the Christians, and kept as relics (see 163).

—*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, selections. (Goodspeed, A.F.).

¹ Either Polycarp had been baptised as a child, or he was a very old man.

Blandina and the Martyrs of Lyons and Vienne, 177

351 The servants of Christ at Vienne and Lyons in Gaul to our brothers in Asia and Phrygia who have the same faith and hope of redemption as we.

This letter describes the martyrdom of at least 48 people in an orgy of persecution that began with mob violence and lasted for several days. Ten Christians, through fear and torture, denied Christ, and one of them, a woman named Biblis, was further tortured to make her say that Christians were guilty of incest and cannibalism.

But on the rack she came to her senses, and, so to speak, awoke out of deep sleep . . . She flatly contradicted the slanderers: 'How could children be eaten by people who are not even allowed to eat the blood of brute beasts?' [Acts 15: 20]. From then on she insisted that she was a Christian, and so she joined the ranks of the martyrs.

But a Christian slave-girl, Blandina, inspired them all.

Through [Blandina] Christ proved that things which men regard as mean, unlovely and contemptible are by God deemed worthy of great glory . . . When we were all afraid, and her earthly mistress [who was herself facing the ordeal of martyrdom] was in agony lest she should be unable even to make a bold confession of Christ because of bodily weakness, Blandina was filled with such power that those who took it in turns to subject her to every kind of torture from morning to night were exhausted by their efforts and confessed themselves beaten—they could think of nothing else to do to her. They were amazed that she was still breathing, for her whole body was mangled, and her wounds gaped . . . But the blessed woman, wrestling magnificently,¹ grew in strength as she proclaimed the faith, and found refreshment, rest, and insensibility to her sufferings in uttering the words: 'I am a Christian; we do nothing to be ashamed of . . .'

On the last day of the sports Blandina was again brought in, and with her Ponticus, a lad of about fifteen. Day after day they had been taken in to watch the rest being punished, and attempts were made to make them swear by the heathen

¹ Martyrs were often compared to Greek athletes.

idols, . . . but to no purpose. Ponticus was encouraged by his sister in Christ, . . . and he bravely endured every punishment till he gave his spirit to God. Last of all, like a noble mother who had encouraged her children, and sent them before her in triumph to the King, blessed Blandina herself passed through all the ordeals of her children and hastened to rejoin them, rejoicing and exulting in her departure as if invited to a wedding supper, not thrown to the beasts.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, from 5 : 1 (W.).

The Persecution under Decius, 250. Certificate

Decius (249-251) was the first Emperor to order systematic persecution of the Christians. There were martyrs in Rome, Palestine, Egypt and Carthage. Certificates were given to those Christians who sacrificed to the gods to save their lives, and others obtained such certificates by bribery, and so escaped. The following is a specimen certificate issued in Egypt.

352 *1st Hand.* To the Commission chosen to superintend the sacrifices at the village of Alexander's Isle. From Aurelius Diogenes, son of Satabous, of the village of Alexander's Isle, aged 72 years, with a scar on the right eyebrow. I have always sacrificed to the gods, and now in your presence in accordance with the edict I have made sacrifice, and poured a libation, and partaken of the sacred victims. I request you to certify this below. Farewell. I, Aurelius Diogenes, have presented this petition.

2nd Hand. I, Aurelius Syrus, saw you and your son sacrificing.

A fragment of a third hand is visible ; it was probably a second witness to the sacrifice.

1st Hand. The year 1 of the Emperor Caesar Decius (the full 8 names of the Emperor are given), Epeiph 2 (June 26, 250).

—Text in *Harvard Theological Review* 16 (Knipfing—S.).

The Problem of the Lapsed

After the persecution was over, the Church was faced with the problem of what to do with those who had lapsed. Differences of opinion on this led to schism. The Council of Carthage in 251 took a fairly moderate view.

- 353** We balanced our resolution with wholesome moderation ; so that neither should hope of communion and peace be altogether denied to the lapsed, lest through desperation they should fall away still further, and . . . live as heathens ; nor yet on the other hand should evangelical strictness be relaxed, so that they might rush in haste to communion ; but that penance should be long and protracted . . .

It was determined . . . that, the cases of each being examined, takers of certificates be for the time admitted ; that to those who have sacrificed, relief should be given in their last moments, because ' in the grave there is no confession ' [Psalm 6 : 5, Old Latin], nor can anyone be urged by us to penitence, if the fruit of penitence is withdrawn . . .

We have determined, that they who do not repent nor testify sorrow for their sins with all their heart, and with open profession of their grief, are to be altogether forbidden the hope of communion and peace, if in sickness and peril they begin to entreat for it.

—Cyprian, *Epistles* 55 : from 6, 7 and 23 (*L.F.*—*S.*).

The Sufferings of Origen

Origen, the great Christian Apologist and Bible Scholar, was 65 years old at the time of the Decian persecution. He never recovered from the treatment he received, and died at Tyre in 254.

- 354** As for Origen, . . . the dreadful cruelties he endured for the work of Christ, chains and bodily torments, agony in iron and the darkness of his cell ; how for days on end his legs were pulled four paces apart in the torturers' stocks—the courage with which he bore threats of fire and every torture devised by his enemies—the way his maltreatment ended, when the judge had striven with might and main at all costs to avoid sentencing him to execution—the messages

he left us after all this, messages full of help for those in need of comfort—of all these things a truthful and detailed account will be found in his own lengthy correspondence.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6 : 39 (W.).

The Bishop who managed to Escape

Persecution did not always end in martyrdom, as the following amusing account, in a letter from Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, quoted by Eusebius, shows.

- 355 When Decius announced his persecution, Sabinus [the Governor] then and there despatched a military policeman to hunt me out, and I stayed at home four days waiting for him to arrive. But though he went round searching every spot—roads, rivers, fields—where he guessed I was hiding or walking, . . . he never imagined that when I was an object of persecution I should stay at home !

After four days, Dionysius quietly made off.

About sunset, my companions and I were caught by the soldiers and taken to Taposiris [30 miles S.-W. of Alexandria]; but by the purpose of God it happened that Timothy was absent and was not caught. When he arrived later, he found the house empty except for a guard of servants, and learnt that we had been captured without hope of release As Timothy fled distracted, he was met by one of the [Christian] villagers on his way to attend a wedding-feast—which in those parts meant an all-night celebration—who asked why he was in such a hurry. He told the truth without hesitation, whereupon the other went in and informed the guests as they reclined at table [at Marea, several miles away.] With one accord, as if at a signal, they all sprang to their feet, came as fast as their legs would carry them, and burst in where we were with such terrifying shouts that the soldiers guarding us instantly took to their heels. Then they stood over us, as we lay on bare mattresses. At first, God knows, I thought they were bandits who had come to plunder and steal, so I stayed on the bed. I had nothing on but a linen shirt; my other clothes that were lying near I held out to them. But they told me to get up and make a bolt for it. Then I realised

what they had come for, and called out, begging and beseeching them to go away and let us be. If they wanted to do me a good turn, they had better forestall my captors and cut off my head themselves. While I shouted like this, they pulled me up by force, as the companions who shared all my adventures know. I let myself fall on my back on the floor, but they grasped me by hands and feet and dragged me out, followed by those who witnessed the whole scene, Gaius, Faustus, Peter and Paul, who picked me up and carried me out of the village, set me on a donkey bareback, and led me away.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6 : 40 (W.*).

It is clear from the above account that Dionysius was afterwards criticised because he had not been a martyr.

The Persecution under Diocletian, 303-311

The persecution under Diocletian was more thorough and prolonged than any before it. It included destruction of Church buildings and confiscation of Bibles.

356 The Prefect, together with the chief commanders, tribunes and officers of the Treasury, came to the Church in Nicomedia [Diocletian's Eastern capital, in Asia Minor]; they forced the doors, and searched everywhere for the image of the god. The Holy Scriptures were found and burnt; the Church was abandoned to general pillage: all was rapine, confusion, tumult. The Church, situated on rising ground, was within view of the Palace, and Diocletian and Galerius [the subordinate Eastern Emperor] stood on a watch-tower, disputing long whether it ought to be set on fire. The sentiment of Diocletian prevailed... Praetorian Guards came in battle array, with axes and other tools; they were let loose everywhere, and in a few hours levelled that very lofty edifice with the ground.

—Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 12 (A.—N.C.L.—S.).

Lactantius was a contemporary; so was Eusebius, who wrote as follows.

357 An Imperial Edict was published everywhere, ordering the Churches to be razed to the ground, and the Scriptures

destroyed by fire, and giving notice that those in places of honour would lose their places, and domestic staff [of the Emperor], if they continued to profess Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty. Such was the first edict against us. Soon afterwards other decrees arrived in rapid succession, ordering that the presidents of the churches in every place should all be first committed to prison and then coerced by every possible means into offering sacrifice . . . I saw with my own eyes the places of worship thrown down from top to bottom, to the very foundations, the inspired Holy Scriptures committed to the flames in the middle of the public squares, and the pastors of the churches hiding.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 8, 2 and 1 (W.).

Interesting details are available of the confiscation of books at Cirta, in North Africa, in May, 303.

- 358** When they came to the house of Felix the tailor, he brought out five books, and when they came to the house of Projestus, he brought five big and two little books. Victor the school-master brought out two books, and four books of five volumes each. Felix the [pagan high-priest] said to him, 'Bring your Scriptures out; you have more.' Victor the school-master said, 'If I had had more I should have brought them.' When they came to the house of Eutychius, who was in the civil service, the priest said, 'Bring out your books, that you may obey the order.' 'I have none', he replied. 'Your answer', said Felix, 'is taken down.' At the house of Coddeo, Coddeo's wife brought out six books. Felix said, 'Look and see if you have not some more.' The woman said, 'I have no more'. So Felix said to the policeman Bous, 'Go in and see if she has any more'. The policeman said, 'I have looked, and found none'.

—*Actions before Zenophilus*, C.S.E.L. 26: 188-9 (Workman P.E.C.*).

The above is an extract made in 320 from the records of Felix, the High Priest and Mayor of Cirta. See also 194.

Galerius admits Failure, 311

Galerius, the subordinate Eastern Emperor, whose bigotry had inspired the persecution, issued an Edict of Toleration in 311 which admitted that the persecution had failed. He was on his death-bed.

- 359 It has been our special care that the Christians . . . who had left the religion of their forefathers should return to a better mind In short, when our order had been set forth to the effect that they should betake themselves to the institutions of the ancients, many of them were subdued by danger, many also exposed to jeopardy. Nevertheless very great numbers held to their determination We therefore in consideration of our most mild clemency, and of the unbroken custom by which we are used to grant pardon to all men, have thought it right in this case also to offer our speediest indulgence, that Christians may exist again, and may establish their meeting-houses, yet so that they do nothing contrary to good order In return for this our indulgence it will be their duty to pray their God for our recovery [from illness], for the good of the state, and their own ; that the state may be preserved from danger, and they may be able to live securely in their homes.

—Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, 34 (Gwatkin—S.*).

2. THE CHRISTIAN ROMAN EMPIRE, 313-410

Toleration of Christianity, 313

The following is an extract from what is known as the 'Edict of Milan', issued in the names of Constantine and Licinius his co-Emperor, who was a pagan.

- 360 Our purpose is to grant both to the Christians and to all others full authority to follow whatever worship each man desires, so that whatever Deity dwells in heaven may be benevolent and propitious to us, and to all who are placed under our authority... No man whatever should be refused complete toleration, who has given his allegiance either to the cult of the Christians, or to the religion which he personally feels best suited to himself.

—Lactantius, *On the Deaths of the Persecutors* 48 : 2-3 (S.*).

A later official letter of Constantine, dated 324, is much more favourable to Christians, calling pagans 'those who still delight in error', but still allowing them toleration.

Privileges for Christian Clergy under Constantine

The following are extracts from two letters of Constantine quoted by Eusebius.

- 361 Constantine Augustus to Caecilian, Bishop of Carthage.

Inasmuch as I have resolved that in all provinces [of North Africa] certain named ministers of the lawful and most Holy Catholic Religion should receive some contribution towards expenses, I have sent a letter to Ursus, the Eminent Finance Officer of Africa, informing him that he must arrange the transfer to Your Steadfastness of [a large sum] in cash. Your task... will be to see that it is distributed among all the persons named above according to the schedule supplied to you.

- 362 Greetings, Anulinus, Your Excellency....

In the province entrusted to you, in the Catholic Church, ... I desire [clergymen] once and for all to be kept entirely free

from all public duties, . . . completely free to serve their own law at all times.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 10:6 and 7 (W.).

Sunday to be a Day of Rest, 321

363 Constantine to Elpidius.

All judges, city-people and craftsmen shall rest on the venerable Day of the Sun. But countrymen may without hindrance attend to agriculture, since it often happens that this is the most suitable day for sowing grain or planting vines, so that the opportunity afforded by Divine providence may not be lost, for the right season is of short duration.

7 March 321.

—Codified in Justinian, *Code of Civil Law* 2:127 (B.).

Christians had previously worshipped on Sundays. See 125-126. This law made it possible for them to rest also.

The Personal Attitude of the Emperor Constantine

364 Once, when Constantine was entertaining a company of bishops, he let fall the expression 'I myself am also a bishop', addressing them in my hearing in the following words: 'You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the church: I also am a bishop, ordained by God to supervise those outside the Church.' And truly his measures corresponded with his words, for he watched over all his subjects with a bishop's care, and exhorted them as far as he could to follow a godly life.

—Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4:24 (N. & P.-N.F.—S.*).

It was in accordance with this serious view of his responsibilities that Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea in 325, and presided over it.

Constantius (337-361) and State Persecution of 'Heresy'

Constantius was an Arian, and he tried by persecution and banishment of orthodox Christians, to establish one Arian Church in his Empire. His pagan successor Julian speaks of this.

- 365 I had imagined that the prelates of the Galileans [Christians] were under greater obligations to me than to my predecessor. For in his reign many of them were banished, persecuted and imprisoned; and many of the so-called heretics were executed.

—Julian, *Epistles* 52 (B.).

Not only did Constantius act thus within his Empire. He sent Theophilus to Arabia and Ethiopia to preach Arianism, and he wrote to the rulers of Ethiopia (Axum) about their pioneer missionary, the orthodox Frumentius (see 36 and 35).

- 366 The victorious Constantius, Highest Augustus, to Ezana and Sazana...

Send Bishop Frumentius to Egypt as soon as possible, to the Right Rev. the Bishop George, and the others in Egypt who have express authority to decide and pronounce judgment in such matters. For unless you alone are pretending to be ignorant of what everyone admits, you know and remember perfectly well that the person who appointed Frumentius to this post was Athanasius, that prolific source of evil!

—Athanasius, *Apology to the Emperor Constantius*. P.G. 25:635-6 (Y.).

Hosius, Bishop of Cordova in Spain, wrote rebuking Constantius, and refusing to subscribe to his condemnation of Athanasius.

- 367 Cease, I implore you, from these proceedings. Remember that you are but mortal... Do not interfere in matters ecclesiastical, nor give us orders on such questions, but learn about them from us. For into your hands God has put the kingdom; the affairs of the Church He has committed to us... I write thus to you out of concern for your salvation. As for the contents of your letter; I am determined not to write to the Arians. I anathematise

their heresy. And I will not subscribe to the indictment of Athanasius; for both we, and the Church of Rome, and the whole Synod, acquitted him.

—Athanasius, *History of Arianism* 44 (B.).

Theodosius I (379-395) and the State Persecution of Arians

A law of Theodosius, promulgated in 380, begins by linking the orthodox Trinitarian Faith with the names of the Apostle Peter, and with the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria.

- 368 According to the Apostolic teaching and the doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe the one Deity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in equal majesty and in a Holy Trinity. We authorise the followers of this law to assume the title of Catholic Christians; but as for the others, since, in our judgment, they are foolish madmen, we decree that they shall be branded with the ignominious name of heretics, and shall not presume to give their conventicles the name of churches. They will suffer in the first place the chastisement of the Divine condemnation, and in the second the punishment which our authority, in accordance with the will of Heaven, shall decide to inflict.

—*Code of Theodosius* 16 : 1.2 (B.).

In 381 a further decree was issued, expelling heretics from cities and forbidding them to enter churches.

The State Suppression of Paganism, 391

- 369 No one shall defile himself with sacrifices: no one shall slay an innocent victim: no one shall enter shrines, frequent temples and pay homage to images fashioned by mortal hands. . . . Proconsuls also shall be bound by his requirement that, if any person surrender himself to a profane rite and enter a temple anywhere, whether on a journey or in the city, with the purpose of offering worship, he be forthwith subjected to a fine of fifteen pounds of gold.

—*Code of Theodosius* 16 : 10.10 (K. 2).

A law of Honorius, in 408 went further: images were to be destroyed, altars broken down, and temples taken over. Bishops were given coercive powers to see that this was carried out.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, and Theodosius

In 388 there was a clash between Ambrose and Theodosius over the penalties imposed by the Emperor on a bishop and monks who had destroyed a synagogue. Ambrose preached on the matter rather plainly before the Emperor.

370 On my coming down he says to me, 'You have been preaching at me to-day'. I replied that in my discourse I had his benefit in view. He then said, 'It is true. I did make too harsh a decree concerning the repair of the synagogue by the bishop, but this has been rectified. As for the monks, they commit many crimes.' Then Timasius, one of the Commanders-in-Chief, began to be very vehement against the monks. I replied to him, 'With the Emperor I deal as is fitting, because I know that he fears God, but with you, who speak so rudely, I shall deal differently.'

After standing for some time, I said to the Emperor, 'Enable me to offer [the Communion elements] for you with a safe conscience. Set my mind at rest.' The Emperor sat still, and nodded, but did not promise in plain words; then, seeing that I remained standing, he said that he would amend the order. I said that he must quash the whole enquiry, for fear the Count [local Governor] should make it an opportunity for inflicting wrong on the Christians. He promised that it should be done. I said to him, 'I act on your promise', and repeated the words again. 'Do so', said he. Then I went to the altar; but I would not have gone, if he had not given me his distinct promise. And indeed so great was the grace attending the oblation, that I myself was conscious that this favour he had granted was very acceptable to our God, and that the Divine Presence had not been withheld. Then all was done as I wished.

—Ambrose, *Epistles* 41 : 27-28 (L.F.*).

Ambrose was to use the same weapon—refusal of communion—against the Emperor on a much more serious occasion in 390, when Theodosius had ordered the massacre of 7,000 people in Thessalonica. Not until the Emperor had openly repented and confessed his sin, and done public penance, was he admitted back into the Church.

Barbarian Invasions, 406

Jerome, writing from Jerusalem, gives vent to the feelings of many Christians as the Barbarians conquered more and more in the West.

- 371 Savage tribes in countless numbers have overrun all parts of Gaul. The whole country between the Alps and the Pyrenees, between the Rhine and the ocean, has been laid waste by hordes [of barbarians, and is] with the exception of a few cities one universal scene of desolation. And those which the sword saves without, famine rages within. I cannot speak without tears of Tolouse.... Even the Spains are on the brink of ruin.... Others... suffer... in anticipation.

—Jerome, *Epistles* 123:16 (N. & P.—N.F.).

The Fall of Rome, 410

In 410 Alaric the Goth sacked Rome, and for many the end of the Christian world seemed to have come. Augustine, in North Africa, had to face the criticism that Christianity had failed to save the Roman Empire. He replied that there was a new factor in the situation—there were Christians among the Barbarians.

- 372 What was new was that Barbarian savagery showed itself so mild that they chose the largest churches and marked them off to be filled with civilians to whom quarter was given. There, no one was to be struck down; thence no one was to be snatched. To these churches many were to be led to be set free by their pitying foes, and from them none taken into cruel captivity. Whoever does not see that this is due to the name of Christ, and to these Christian times, is blind. Whoever sees without praising is unthankful. Whoever hinders another's praise is mad....

The whole family of God Most High and True has its own comfort, and one that does not fail.... In this mortal life a man is trained for life eternal.... They ask, 'Where is your God?' This family replies, 'My God is everywhere, all of Him everywhere, nowhere shut in, able to come unseen, and to go without moving, and when He troubles me with adversity, it is to prove my worth, or to

correct my faults, while He keeps for me, for right bearing of temporal ills, an eternal reward.'

—Augustine, *The City of God* 1: 5 and 29 (W.T.C.).

In point of fact, the Church survived the fall of Rome, and became of central importance in the new peoples of Western Europe.

3. AFTER THE FALL OF ROME

In the West—The Rising Power of the Papacy

Officially, the Western Roman Empire came to an end in 476, but though most of Italy was temporarily reconquered by Justinian's generals in the 6th Century, the one dominating influence in the West came to be that of the Popes, who adopted a more and more independent attitude towards the Emperors in Constantinople. The following letter, from Pope Gelasius to Anastasius I, written in 494, is typical.

- 373 There are, O Emperor Augustus, two by whom principally this world is ruled : the sacred authority of the pontiffs, and the royal power. Of these the importance of the priests is so much the greater, as even for Kings of men they will have to give an account in the Divine judgment. Know indeed, most clement son, that although you worthily rule over the human race, yet as a man of devotion in Divine matters you submit your neck to the prelates, and also from them you await the matters of your salvation, and in making use of the celestial sacraments and in administering those things, you know that you ought, as is right, to be subjected to the order of religion rather than preside over it. Know likewise that in regard to these things you are dependent upon their judgment and you should not bend them to your will . . . And if it is right that the hearts of the faithful be submitted to all priests generally who treat rightly Divine things, how much more is obedience to be shown to the Prelate of that See which the Highest Deity wished to be pre-eminent over all priests, and which the devotion of the whole Church continually honours ?

—Pope Gelasius, *Epistles* 12. *P.L.* 59:42 (Ayer, *Source-Book* pp. 530-532*).

In the East—The Emperor dominates the Church

In the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire, the State grew more and more dominant over the affairs of the Church. The following two Edicts of the Emperor Justinian, of 535 and 543, are typical of the attitude of the Emperors.

- 374 Among the greatest gifts of God bestowed by the kindness of heaven were the priesthood and the Imperial dignity.

Of these, the former serves things Divine ; the latter rules human affairs, and cares for them. Both are derived from one and the same source, and order human life. And therefore nothing is so much a care to the Emperors as the dignity of the priesthood, so that they may always pray to God for them.

—Justinian, *Novel 6*, Preface (Ayer, *Source-Book*, pp. 554-555).

375 We command that all bishops and presbyters shall offer the sacred oblation [Eucharist] and the prayers in Holy Baptism not silently, but with a voice which may be heard by the faithful people, that by it the minds of those listening may be moved to greater contrition and to the glory of God The holy priests should know that if they neglect any of these things they shall render an account at the terrible Day of Judgment, . . . and we shall not quietly permit such things when we know of them, and will not leave them unpunished. We command therefore that the Governors of the Eparchies, if they see anything neglected of those things which have been decreed by us, first urge the metropolitans and other bishops . . . to do whatever things we have ordered by this present law concerning synods, and if they see them delaying, let them report to us, that from us there may come a proper correction of those who put off holding synods. And the Governors and the officials subject to them should know that, if they do not observe these matters, they will be liable to the penalty of death. But we confirm by this present law all things which have been decreed by us in various constitutions concerning bishops, presbyters and other clergy, and also concerning lodging-places for strangers, poor-houses, orphan asylums and others as many as are over the sacred buildings.

—Justinian, *Novel 138:6* (Ayer, *Source-Book*, pp. 555-556*).

This kind of relationship between Church and State remained characteristic of the Byzantine Empire till its fall in 1453.

C. CHURCH AND STATE IN THE PERSIAN EMPIRES

I. THE PARTHIAN EMPIRE, UP TO 225-6

The Arsacid Parthian Empire was loosely-knit, ruled by kings who were constantly at war both with the Romans, and with the Persians and the hill tribes in the north of their Empire. The Kings were nominally Zoroastrians, but though the Magi could be powerful locally, there was much tolerance, and the religion of the people was a mixture of Zoroastrianism and debased idolatry. The *Chronicle of Arbil*, written between 550 and 569, gives some vivid pictures of the position of the Church, which may well be authentic, as they are based on earlier written sources.

The Martyrdom of Samsun of Arbil, 123

376 (In 120) Mirza, Bishop of Bait Zabdi [near Nisibin], came to the land of Hedayab with a trading caravan. When he heard that there was a congregation of Christians there, he went to them secretly, and when he had gained their confidence, they invited him into their house and told him that they had been six years without a head. They begged him to lay hands on the deacon Samsun and consecrate him bishop. When he heard that Samsun had been deacon to Paqida (the previous bishop) he agreed to their reasonable request, and ordained him. Samsun in turn began to rule over this Divine congregation

He began to preach in the surrounding villages. These worshipped fire, and were in the habit of throwing in little children at the time of their great Feast of Shah Rabb Gamud.¹ The writer Habil² describes this feast as follows: 'This feast comes in the month of Iar,³ and people from all the country around collect near the great fountain. After bathing in it, they sit down, prepare food, and give all their slaves something to eat. The people themselves do not eat until after they have thrown one of their little children into the fire. Then they take out his liver and kidneys, and hang them on the branches of the trees there, as a token that they have feasted. Finally they shoot several arrows into the air, as a sign of rejoicing, and return home.'

¹ Shah Rabb—'Lord King'—suggests a connection with Moloch—'King' (see Leviticus 18:21).

² Habil's dates are unknown.

³ About May.

Samsun preached to them for two years, and after that he baptised a large number of them, and thanks to his virtues, the Christian Faith spread widely in their countryside. But when the nobles and Magi heard of this, they put Samsun in chains, and after several tortures, they cut off his head. This happened, according to Habil the Doctor, seven years after the defeat of Khusrau, King of the Arsacids by Trajan, King of the Romans, who had invaded our country [i.e. 7 years after 116]. Samsun was the first martyr from our country who ascended to heaven.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 3-5. (French in Mingana, *S.S.* 1, pp. 79-80. Y.).

Raqbakht, a Christian Governor and Warrior, c. 140

- 377 There was a famous and wealthy man, called Raqbakht, who, it is said, had been appointed by the Kings to govern this province [Hedayab]. When he heard about Mar Izhaq [Bishop of Arbil], he sought him out and asked him about his religion. He was very pleased with what he heard, and asked to be allowed to participate. After many days, Izhaq baptised him secretly, because he was afraid of Walgash, King of the Parthians [Walgash II, 133—c. 148]. This man of God, the Constantine of his time, helped the Christian Faith to spread in the villages round about. The pagan priests opposed him and tried to change his attitude to the Christians; but when they saw it was useless, they decided to murder him, so that the Magian religion would conquer.

Habil the Doctor tells the story of how they conspired to kill the Governor. Several Magi from the mountain-country were to come to him, dressed as Roman travellers, ask for his hospitality, and then murder him during the night. News was sent that Roman travellers were coming.

When the saint of God heard this, he made careful preparation, and carried out the necessary arrangements with all speed, and his soul rejoiced in God, for he thought he might have an opportunity to convert [these strangers] to the religion of the One God, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

When these messengers of Satan arrived, mounted on caparisoned horses, all was ready for their reception.

But God intervened to save His servant.

While they were still at supper, a messenger from Ctesiphon came to seek out the saint of God, and in the name of King Walgash to command him, if he wished him well, to come to Ctesiphon without delay, so that the combined forces of the two men might check the impetuosity of the barbarian peoples, who had swooped on the mountain country of Qardu¹, and had plundered and destroyed many cities. He rose at once, and asked his brother—who was a pagan—to see to the needs of his satanic guests. He and the messenger set out without delay, accompanied only by a few men from his household. He left instructions to his brother to collect his forces, take command of them, and bring them to Ctesiphon.

Frustrated, the Magi attacked Bishop Izhaq instead.

Two days afterwards, therefore, they came and imprisoned him in a dark dungeon. They would have liked to kill him, but they were afraid it would lead to a riot and popular outcry. They were also very afraid of General Raqbakht.

When he, conqueror by his God, heard this sad news, he sent orders from Ctesiphon, where he was, to set the servant of God free, bring him out of prison, and grant him full liberty. He threatened, upon many solemn oaths, to slay anyone who disobeyed his order and did not act on it. Than the prophet of God came out of prison.

Raqbakht accompanied the King's General Arshaq, with combined forces of 20,000 men, against the marauders. After a skirmish, the enemy leader Kizo succeeded in trapping the Parthian army in a pass. Raqbakht led his own personal followers in a sortie up the mountain slopes, and succeeded in opening an escape route.

But the hero of God had been cut down in the midst of the enemy ranks: one of them had pierced him with the thrust of a lance, and he fell dead. Like Judas Macabbaeus, he had given his life in sacrifice to his Lord for his people; for if he had not acted thus, by an effort of love, all the army would have perished.

¹ Kurdistan, lying between Armenia and Mesopotamia.

The invaders were about to advance into the plains when they heard that their own land had been invaded by barbarians from across the Caspian Sea. They therefore abandoned their campaign and returned home. The whole land mourned the death of Raqbakht.

Who can to-day describe the sorrow of Izhaq, at the death of his protector? We can only be silent about this, because only at the Day of Judgment shall we see things clearly as they really are.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 6-10. (French in Mingana, *S.S.*, I, pp. 82-86. Y.).

An Attempt to get State Protection for the Church, c. 160

Bishop Abraham of Arbil (148-163) spent a long time away from his See, doing evangelistic work in the mountain country.

378 While he was living among the high mountains, teaching the Christian Faith, the Magi rose against the Christians of our district, plundered their goods, and tortured them terribly. When news of this reached the Bishop Mar Abraham, he came down from the mountains. By the power of the miracles he performed and the authority of his wonderful wisdom, he prevented the savage wolves from completely devouring the servants of Christ. When he had calmed them down, he went off to Ctesiphon. King Walgash II was dead, and Walgash III [c. 148-191] had succeeded him. The servant of God had taken with him various presents for the nobles of the City, in the hope of obtaining through them a letter from the pagan King in favour of the Christians of his district, so that they would not be ill-treated, unreasonably and unjustly, by the Magi. The unsettled state of the Kingdom, however, prevented him from attaining his end. Armies had gathered from all the countries, and were preparing to burst out upon the country of the Romans. He came back, therefore, without being able to obtain any letter.

But God frustrates the devices of kings. The Parthians were defeated, and the Romans advanced to the gates of Ctesiphon. There plague forced them to return home; leaving behind them

many dead and much loot. The plague raged in Persia for three months. Abraham tended and comforted the Christians who were sick of it, caught it himself, and died.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 11-12 (French in Mingana, S.S. I, pp. 87-89. Y.).

For a brief but vivid account of persecution in Hedayab about 180, see 21.

379 In the space of a year, they took the whole land, and all the activity of the Parthians was useless—for their day had come and their hour had struck. In the end, they fled completely to the high mountains, leaving to the Persians all their land, and the wealth they had stored in the Cities [Seleucia-Ctesiphon]. The young son of Artabanus, called Artaban, was murdered in cold blood by the Persians at Ctesiphon, and they took up residence there and made it their capital. The day which saw the end of the Kingdom of the Parthians, children of the brave Artaban (Artabanids), was a Wednesday, the 27th of Nisan, the year 535 of the Greek Kingdom [April, A.D. 225].

At the beginning of the reign of the Persians, there was peace for the Christians, who were able to grow and extend.

These were days of persecution in the Roman Empire.

We had nothing like that. The Kings were tired and harassed by the daily wars, and there were as yet no cruel persecutions against us. For this reason the news of the Gospel was even to reach out her branches into the sea, and her branches into the river. [Psalm 80].

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 29-30. (French in Mingana, S.S. I, pp. 107-108. Y.).

The Religious Policy of the Sassanid Emperors

Under the Sassanid Dynasty there was an attempt to revive the old Persian Empire, and an emphasis on nationalism, with Zoroastrianism, and its priests the Magi, as the State Religion.

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2. THE SASSANID PERSIAN EMPIRE, 226-652

The Fall of the Parthian Empire

The reign of Arudwan V (216-224) saw wars with the Romans, and attacks from the Persians. Finally the Persians invaded Mesopotamia.

- 379 In the space of a year, they took the whole land, and all the activity of the Parthians was useless—for their day had come and their hour had struck. In the end, they fled completely to the high mountains, leaving to the Persians all their land, and the wealth they had stored in the Cities [Seleucia-Ctesiphon]. The young son of Arudwan, called Arshaq, was murdered in cold blood by the Persians at Ctesiphon, and they took up residence there and made it their capital. The day which saw the end of the Kingdom of the Parthians, children of the brave Arshaq (Arsacids), was a Wednesday, the 27th of Nisan, the year 535 of the Greek Kingdom [April, A.D. 225].

At the beginning of the reign of the Persians, there was peace for the Christians, who were able to grow and extend.

These were days of persecutions in the Roman Empire.

We had nothing like that. The Kings were tired and harassed by the daily wars, and there were as yet no cruel persecutions against us. For this reason the news of the Gospel was even to 'send out her boughs into the sea, and her branches unto the river.' [Psalm 80:9]

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 29-30. (French in Mingana, S.S. I., pp. 105-6. Y).

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- 380 When the Persians became masters of the East, the Christians feared [persecution]. Ardashir [226-241], the first King of the Persians. . . made an edict that Fire-Temples

should be set up in honour of his gods ; and that the sun, the great god of the whole universe, should be honoured with special worship. He was the first to take the title of King of Kings, and god. Seeking to attach to himself the honour due to the gods, he added blasphemy to injustice. [He also compelled] several foreign cults to enter and merge themselves into the cult of the sun and of fire.

Christianity, however, was tolerated by the State while the Roman Empire was pagan. It was when the Roman Empire became officially Christian that State persecution began in Persia.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 30-31. (French in Mingana, *S.S.*, I, p. 108. Y.)

The preacher who went too far, c. 280

Bihram II (276-293) met and suppressed with savage cruelty a rebellion by the Governor of Hedayab. Shortly afterwards, Ahadabuhi Bishop of Arbil and Shabsa Bishop of Bait-Zabdi were invited to visit the Christians of Ctesiphon, and stayed a year.

381 One day Shabsa stood up in the middle of a crowd, and tried to prove to the people that we ought not to fear him who can destroy only the body, but rather Him who can cast both soul and body into the Gehanna of Fire [Matthew 10:28]. He spoke very sharply, and made the point that the victory of our Lord is really a victory, while what the kings of this world call victory is nothing but pride, pretention, ills, torments, sufferings and death. *Pride*—because, when kings triumph, they triumph only according to the flesh, and that is why they become unduly haughty and proud. They forget their mortal nature and think they are gods. This adds infinitely to their sins, and their reward will be fire that will never go out. *Ills*—because even at the time of their victory, who can tell what fatigues they put up with? Before the battle takes place, they worry ceaselessly about its outcome—will they win, or will they lose? They worry about this night and day—and how many sleepless nights they have! *Death*—because without doubt there will be deaths on both sides, and this brings suffering to parents and relatives, and makes the tears of the mothers flow, because their children have been cut in

pieces by the edge of the sword, and their dearly beloved sons have been transfixed by the steel of lances. But Christ's victory was a cause of rejoicing for all mankind—even for His enemies, the pagans and the Jews.

While he was still in the middle of his sermon, one of the pagans who was there got up and reported to a Minister of the King that the Christians were teaching that the King of Kings would be tortured and tormented by fire, and that his [recent] victory was not really a victory, but a rebellion and a fraud! When the Christians heard about what had happened, they were very upset, and hid themselves in their houses. Some fled to the desert. Bishop Shabsa got up that same night and walked straight off, not knowing where he was going. He was afraid to show his face, for fear he would be seized and beaten, and remained in this state for two years. The Christians sent gifts to a Minister called Radgan and begged him to turn away from them the anger of the King, which lying and seditious men had unjustly aroused against them. God guided the heart of Radgan in such a way that he settled the matter and appeased the King's great wrath.... The time for persecutions had not yet come.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 39-41 (French in Mingana, S.S. I, pp. 117-118. Y.).

The Appointment of a Bishop in the Capital, 291

382 When the Kingdom of the Arsacid-Parthians had come to an end, the Christians [of the Capital] asked for a Bishop of their own, as we shall tell. . . .

In the army of Shapur I [241-271] there was a wealthy Christian, named Ganzqan. When he went to Hedayab, and saw that there were many Christians in the district and its villages, he begged Shahlufa [Bishop of Arbil] to come to Ctesiphon and visit the little group of brethren who had begun to show themselves there. Shahlufa was afraid to go, but Ganzqan reassured him and calmed his fears, and he set off, strong in his God.

On the way he and his companions were kidnapped by Arab raiders, and it was four months before he was able to escape.

Then they entered into the rich City of Ctesiphon, gathered all the brethren who were there, and encouraged them. Shahlufa laid his hands on a man and ordained him priest. He stayed two years, from the time King Shapur left Ctesiphon till the time of his return.

Then he returned to Arbil. His successor Ahadabuhi, visited Ctesiphon about 280, and ordained a further five priests, but had to leave hurriedly (see above, 381). The people felt the need of a bishop of their own, and went again to Ahadabuhi.

The inhabitants of Ctesiphon asked him urgently to consecrate a bishop, who would remain always in their midst. 'There is a good number of Christians here,' they said. 'The Lord Bishops are far from us, and cannot come every day to us, to meet our needs and guide us in the ways of justice, spiritually and materially.' He agreed readily to do what they asked, and consulted Haibi'el, Bishop of Susa. The two agreed to elect Papa, a Syrian, a very learned and wise man. Then everyone went back to his own country.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 31, 34 and 41 (French in Mingana, *S.S.* I, pp. 107, 111, 119. Y.).

Attempts to Establish the Primacy of Ctesiphon

- 383 This Papa, Bishop of the Cities, lived in the Capital of the Kingdom, and the other bishops needed his help in outward affairs. He went on to claim supremacy over all the bishops, as though they needed only one Head.

There was opposition, but Papa strengthened his hand by writing to the Bishop of Edessa suggesting official recognition as Patriarch. He consulted with other Western Bishops.

They wrote a letter [to the Emperor Constantine] on this subject in their name, addressed to the Kings and nobles of the West, saying that, as in the West—that is, the Roman Empire—there were several Patriarchs—those of Antioch, Rome, Alexandria and Constantinople¹—so there should be in the East, that is, the Persian Empire, at least one Patriarch.

¹ This had been laid down by the Council of Nicaea in 325. See 204. Note, however, that Constantinople is not mentioned there.

This request was agreed to, and accepted by all the Eastern bishops, who were afraid otherwise of trouble both from Constantine and from Shapur II.

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 44-45 (French in Mingana, *S.S.* I, pp. 121-123. Y.).

It is possible that one condition laid down by the Western Bishops was that the Patriarch of Ctesiphon should be consecrated by the Patriarch of Antioch. This is stated in a Jacobite letter written about 760-790, and implied in a statement of the Nestorian John of Penek written about 700. The following statement of the contemporary Afrahat shows that the arrangement was resented as implying a subordination to the West. See also 27 note 2.

384 Our brother, adorned with the tiara, was not well-liked by the people of his own country. He went to seek other distant kings, and asked for chains and fetters, which he distributed in his country and city. This king, adorned with the tiara, ought rather to have asked the kings his colleagues for presents, to distribute to the princes and citizens of his country and his city, instead of asking for chains and fetters.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 14 (*P.O.* 1:1, col. 587. French in Labourt, *C.E.P.* 25. Y.).

The primacy of the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was not to be firmly established till 410, and its independence of the West till 424. See below, 393-395, 397.

Letter of Constantine the Great to Shapur II, c. 315

Eusebius tells of an embassy sent by Shapur II (309-379) to Constantine the Great, with presents and assurances of peace and friendship. In reply, Constantine sent lavish gifts, and a letter, which included the following exhortation.

385 I profess the Most Holy Religion [Christianity]; and I declare that this worship teaches me deeper acquaintance with the Most Holy God . . . Imagine, then, with what joy I heard news so much in line with my desire, that the fairest provinces of Persia are to a great extent adorned by the presence of that class of men on whose behalf alone I am at present speaking—I mean the Christians. I pray, therefore, that both you and they may enjoy abundant prosperity,

and that you and they may be equally blessed, for in this way you will experience the mercy and favour of that God who is the Lord and Father of all. And now, because your power is great, I commend these people to your protection; because your piety is outstanding, I commit them to your care. Care for them with your accustomed humanity and kindness. By this proof of faith you will obtain an immeasurable benefit both for yourself and us.

—Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 4:9 and 13 (G.E.H.*).

This well-intentioned, but unfortunate letter, tended to identify the Persian Christians with a foreign and often enemy Power.

God is on the side of the Romans, 337

When war broke out between the two Empires, the Persian Christian Afrahat had no doubt which was God's side.

386 God's people [the Romans] have received prosperity, and success awaits the man who has been the instrument of that prosperity [Constantine]. But disaster threatens the army which has been gathered together by the efforts of a wicked and proud man, puffed up with vanity [Shapur], and in the other world a curse awaits the man who is the cause of the disaster. Nevertheless, my friend, do not complain of the wicked one who has brought about the unhappiness of a multitude of people, for the times have been foreseen and ordained, and now is the occasion of their fulfilment.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 5 (French in Labourt, C.E.P. 48. Y.).

387 [The Roman] Empire shall not be conquered. Have no doubt of this, for the Hero whose name is Jesus is coming with His power, and His armour upholds the whole army of the Empire... His sign [the Cross] has been multiplied in their land. They have put on His armour, and are invincible.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 5 (French in Labourt, C.E.P. 48. Y.).

The Outbreak of Persecution, 339

388 The King wrote a letter from Syria to the princes, in the following terms: 'When you have taken note of Our

Divine Majesty's present instruction, which is enclosed in the cover we have sent, you shall at once arrest Shim'un, the Head of the Nazarenes [Christians]. You shall not release him until he has signed this document, and promised to levy, and hand over to us, a double poll-tax and tribute from all the Nazarene people living in the country of Our Divine Majesty, and inhabiting our territory. For Our Divine Majesty has nothing but the troubles of war, and they have nothing but rest and pleasure! They live in our territory, but their sympathies are with Caesar, our enemy.'

Shim'un refused to levy such a heavy tribute.

[Shapur] fell into a violent rage, gnashed his teeth, and struck his hands together, saying: 'Shim'un wants to arouse his disciples and his people to rebel against my Empire. He wants to make them slaves of Caesar, who has the same religion as they have: that is why he disobeys my orders!' And the courtiers echoed the words of the King. 'If Your Majesty, who is the King of Kings, and Lord of all the earth, sends magnificent public letters, with precious gifts and superb presents, to Caesar—he thinks nothing of them. If, on the other hand, Shim'un addresses a mere scrap of a letter to him—Caesar will get up, fall on his knees, receive it in his very hands, and at once do what it asks! Besides this, it is no secret that Shim'un writes to Caesar to give him information.'

—Bedjan, *Acts of the Martyrs and Saints* 2: 136 and 143. (French in Labourt, *C.E.P.* pp. 45-46. Y.)

The Martyrdom of Shim'un bar Saba'i, 341

The Greek historian Sozomen, writing about 425, was well-informed about the persecutions in Persia. His accounts give an accurate summary of the contemporary *Acts of the Martyrs and Saints*.

- 389 When, in course of time, the Christians increased in number, assembled as churches, and appointed priests and deacons, the Magi . . . became deeply incensed against them. The Jews . . . were likewise offended. They therefore brought accusations before Shapur [II], the reigning King, against Shim'un, who was then Metropolitan of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, the Royal Cities of Persia, and charged him with being a friend of the Caesar of the Romans, and with

communicating the affairs of the Persians to him. Shapur believed these accusations, and at first imposed intolerably oppressive taxes upon the Christians . . . He appointed cruel men to exact these taxes, hoping that, by being deprived of the necessities of life, and by the atrocity of the tax-gatherers, they might be compelled to abjure their religion—for this was his aim. Afterwards, however, he commanded that the priests and ministers of God should be slain with the sword. The churches were demolished, their vessels were deposited in the Treasury, and Shim'un was arrested as a traitor to the Kingdom and religion of the Persians. In this way the Magi, with the co-operation of the Jews, quickly destroyed the houses of prayer.

Shim'un was arrested, bound with chains, and brought before the King. There he showed clearly the excellence and firmness of his character ; for when Shapur commanded that he should be led away to the torture, he did not fear, and refused to prostrate himself. The King, greatly exasperated, asked why he did not prostrate himself, as he had done formerly. Shim'un replied that he had not formerly been led away bound, in order that he might abjure the truth of God When he had finished speaking, the King commanded him to worship the sun. He promised, as an inducement, that he would bestow gifts upon him, and raise him to honour ; but on the other hand he threatened that, if he did not comply, he would destroy him and the whole body of the Christians as a punishment. When the King found that promises and menaces were alike unavailing . . . he remanded him in prison

The following day, which happened to be the sixth day of the week, and likewise the day on which, because it came immediately before the Festival of the Resurrection, the annual memorial of the Passion of the Saviour is celebrated, the King issued orders for the decapitation of Shim'un ; for he had been again brought to the palace from the prison, and had reasoned most boldly with Shapur on points of doctrine, and had expressed a determination never to worship either the King or the sun. On the same day, a hundred other prisoners were ordered to be slain. Shim'un saw their execution, and last of all he was put to death. Among the victims were bishops, presbyters, and other clergy of different grades.

—Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2 : 9 and 10 (G.E.H.*).

The Number of the Martyrs, 339-379

The persecution lasted for 40 years. The details given by Sozomen may possibly be exaggerated, but they show that it was on a much bigger scale than anything that took place in the Roman Empire.

- 390** I shall briefly state that the number of men and women whose names have been ascertained, and who were martyred at this period, has been computed to be sixteen thousand ; while the multitude outside of these is beyond enumeration, and for this reason to reckon off their names appeared difficult to the Persians and Syrians, and to the inhabitants of Edessa, who have devoted much care to the matter.

—Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, 2 : 14 (N.&P.—N.F.).

Why does God allow this Persecution ? Afrahat, 344

- 391** It happened one day that a man, who is considered wise among the Jews, questioned me, saying :

‘ Jesus, who is called your Teacher, wrote for you that “ if ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; it shall be done ” [Matthew 17 : 20 and 21 : 22]. Apparently, therefore, there is not one wise man in all your people whose prayer is heard, and who asks of God that your persecutors should cease from troubling you. For clearly it is written for you in that passage : “ Nothing shall be impossible unto you ”.’

Afrahat in reply quotes many examples of Old Testament Prophets who suffered for their faith. Then he continues :

Great and excellent is the martyrdom of Jesus. He surpassed in affliction and in confession all who were before or after.

And after Jesus, Apostles in turn had been martyrs. And also concerning our brethren who are in the West, in the days of Diocletian there came great affliction and persecution to the whole Church of God, which was in all their region. The churches were overthrown and uprooted, and many confessors and martyrs made confession. And [the

Lord] turned in mercy to them after they had been persecuted. And also in our days these things have happened to us on account of our sins, but also in order that what is written might be fulfilled, even as our Redeemer said, 'All these things must come to pass' [Matthew 24: 6]. The Apostle also said: 'We also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses' [Hebrews 12: 1]. This is our honour, in which many confess, and are slain.

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 21 (A.—N.C.L.*).

The Christians accepted as a Subject-Community in Persia, 410

The decision of Yazdgard I, establishing the Christians as a *millat*, or subject-community, in the Persian Empire, with the Patriarch of Seleucia-Ctesiphon as their recognised Head, was regulative for Church-State relations afterwards, not only in the Sassanid Empire, but under the Muslims.

392 In the eleventh year of Yazdgard, King of Kings, victorious, . . . he ordered that throughout the Empire the temples [churches] destroyed by his fathers should be magnificently rebuilt, . . . and that those who had been put to the test for God, who had endured prison and torture, should come out freely, that the priests and [all clergy including monks] should have liberty to go about.

A synod assembled at Seleucia, largely through the efforts of Mar Maruta, an Armenian bishop who was acting as peace-maker between the Persian and Roman Empires.

Some days afterwards, our holy fathers, Mar Izhaq, Catholicos of the East, and Mar Maruta, Bishop, spoke to the victorious and illustrious King of Kings. He, with wisdom and liberality, issued an Edict, and gave orders to Khusrau-Yazdgard, his Prime Minister, and to Mihr Shapur [his Commander-in-Chief]. All we bishops entered into the royal presence, and heard all. In brief, what he said was this:

'Previously, there was a great persecution against you, and you had to go about in secret; now the King of Kings has brought you great peace and tranquillity. Thanks to the

frequent meetings the King of Kings has had with the Catholicos Izhaq, whom he has been pleased to establish Head of all the Christians of the East, and especially since the day when Bishop Maruta came here, by the favour of the King of Kings, peace and tranquillity have increased to you. With regard to the letter which has come from the land of the Romans, concerning the bishops of this place, Yazdgard, King of Kings, now commands as follows: Every man whom you shall choose and know to be capable of governing and directing the people of God, who shall be appointed by the Bishops Izhaq and Maruta, shall be Head.¹ No one must separate himself from them; if anyone opposes them and acts contrary to their will, let them tell us, and we shall inform the King of Kings; and no matter who he be, his malice shall be punished.'

We went out from his presence in a body.

Izhaq and Maruta pointed out that this was to regulate canon law in future, and the assembly was invited to sign acceptance. They replied unanimously:

'Certainly we shall do it, and sign with joy. Anyone who does not accept it, and behaves in a disorderly spirit after this definition has been laid down, shall be totally rejected, and rightly so, by the whole Church of Christ. There will be no remedy for him: he shall be condemned to a severe sentence by the King of Kings, and subjected to rigorous imprisonment, shame, and scorn.'...

We instructed the Notary to write: 'First of all, in all the churches, prayers, petitions, supplications and entreaties shall be made to God, to His Christ, and to His Living and Holy Spirit, for Kings and Potentates, that they may live in peace and tranquillity, and that they may not conceive any proud and violent design against the people of God and the Church of God.'

—*Acts of the Synod of Seleucia*, 410. (French in Chabot, *S.O.*, pp. 254 260 and 261. Y.)

¹ Possibly this refers to the appointment of Metropolitans. Stevenson, however, translates 'will hold valid office'.

The Primacy of the See of Seleucia-Ctesiphon

Among the canons passed at the Synod of Seleucia were the following :

393 12. We accept of our own free-will, and we have been commanded by Yazdgard, King of Kings—we, all the Bishops of the East, and those who shall come after us—to obey, in all things right and prescribed, the Bishop, Catholicos, Archbishop, Metropolitan, of Seleucia and Ctesiphon, until Christ shall come—that is to say, every bishop who shall sit on the sublime throne of this Church of Koke.¹

394 20. When the bishop of one of the dioceses under his jurisdiction dies, a metropolitan must assemble the bishops under him and establish as bishop the person chosen by that city. After ordaining him, he shall send him, with a letter, to the Great Metropolitan,² so that he may be perfected³ by him. Apart from that, a bishop metropolitan has no power over the bishops placed under his jurisdiction ; he cannot by avarice or gluttony force them to receive or give anything.

395 21. The first and principal See is that of Seleucia-Ctesiphon. The bishop who occupies it is the Great Metropolitan and Head of all the bishops. The Bishop of Kashkar is under the jurisdiction of this Metropolitan. He is his right hand, and his servant. He governs the diocese after his death. The metropolitan of a single province is under the jurisdiction of this Great Metropolitan, who occupies the See of Seleucia and Ctesiphon.

—*Acts of the Synod of Seleucia*, 410. (French in Chabot, *S.O.*, pp. 266 and 272. Y.)

¹ The parish church of Seleucia.

² See Canon 21.

³ i.e., consecrated or authorised as Bishop. Compare 432, note 2.

An incident in the Persecution under Bihram V, 420-422

At the beginning of the reign of Bihram V, persecution of the Christians again broke out. It was marked by terrible refinements of cruelty.

396 The King . . . seized and imprisoned a deacon of the name of Benjamin. After two years there came an envoy from

Rome, to treat of other matters. When he was informed of this imprisonment, he petitioned the King to release the deacon. The King ordered Benjamin to promise that he would not attempt to teach the Christian religion to any of the Magi, and the envoy exhorted Benjamin to obey, but Benjamin . . . replied : ' It is impossible for me not to impart the light which I have received. The history of the Holy Gospels teaches us how great a penalty is due if we hide our talent ' [Matthew 25 : 24-30]. Up to this time the King had not been informed of this refusal, and he ordered him to be set free. Benjamin continued as he was wont, seeking to catch those who were held down by the darkness of ignorance, and bringing them to the light of knowledge. After a year the King was informed about his conduct, and he was summoned and ordered to deny Him whom he worshipped.

He refused, in spite of terrible and varied tortures. Finally the impious and savage tyrant ordered him to be impaled upon a stout knotted staff, and so the noble sufferer gave up the ghost.

—Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History* 5 : 38 (N. & P.—N.F.*).

Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrrhus north-east of Antioch, was a contemporary of these persecutions, and was well-informed, possibly by refugees.

The Persian Church declares its Independence, 424

It was becoming increasingly clear that if there was to be peace between Church and State in Persia, the Church would have to declare its independence of the West. The Patriarch Dad-ishu' (421-456) had been imprisoned by the Persian authorities, instigated by rebel bishops, who challenged his primacy and discipline. Through the good offices of the ambassadors of the Byzantine Emperor Theodosius II, he was liberated, and decided to retire to a monastery.

- 397** In the fourth year of Bihram, King of Kings ; in the presence of Mar Dad-ishu', Catholicos, Supreme Head of the bishops, and Governor of all Eastern Christendom, there were assembled at Markabta of the Arabs,¹

¹ Location unknown. Probably a village near Ctesiphon. It would be dangerous to meet publicly in the Capital.

36 bishops, headed by Agapit, Metropolitan of Gundeshapur. Dad-ishu' stated his intention to resign. Agapit then addressed the Synod.

'Whenever schism and discord have arisen among us, the Western Fathers have supported and helped this Patriarchate . . . They have also liberated and delivered us from the persecutions which the Magi have aroused against our fathers and us, thanks to the ambassadors whom they have sent at different times. But now, when we are so weighed down with persecution and anguish, circumstances do not permit them to trouble themselves about us as formerly;² but it is now for us, like beloved children and faithful heirs, to try to raise and help ourselves, by means of the Authority set over us; for if—which God forbid!—we [lose our Patriarch], we shall be completely lost. Come, . . . let us face every kind of death for our Father and Head, the Catholicos Dad-ishu'! He is our Peter, the Head of our Church Body.'

The Synod then went on to define in the following terms the independence of their Church and its Patriarch, and when this had been done, Dad-ishu' agreed to resume office.

'We have accepted and we accept the divine precepts and fatherly laws, which at various times have been transmitted to this Eastern land where we live, and lay down that the Father cannot be driven from his inheritance by his children, and the Head and Commander cannot be ordered about and dominated by those who are under him.

'WHEREAS it has been decreed by the Western Fathers that our bishops are not allowed to hold an assembly against the will of their Head, nor to prepare in writing heads of accusation and reproach; but if they have any complaint to make, and obtain no satisfaction at the Assembly in presence of Patriarch, they may appeal to his colleagues [the Patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, etc.], who shall examine the matter and decide between him and them;³

'And WHEREAS we have often experienced the fact that those who complain against the Catholicos have been

² A false statement, perhaps meant for Persian official consumption!

³ This may be in the terms of the reply sent by the Western bishops to Papa's request for recognition as Patriarch (see 383).

condemned, punished for their folly by deprivation and deposition, and stripped of the title of their order and the vestment which they wore :⁴

‘NOW by the Word of God, WE DECREE that the Easterns shall not be permitted to carry complaints against their Patriarch before the Western Patriarchs, and that every case which cannot be determined in the presence of their Patriarch shall be left to the judgment of Christ No one for any reason shall be allowed to think or say that the Catholicos of the East can be judged by those under him, or by a patriarch like him. His own judgment is reserved for the Christ who has chosen him, raised him up, and placed him at the head of His Church.’

—*Acts of the Synod of Dad-ishu*, 424. (French in Chabot, *S.O.*, pp. 293-6. K.2* and Y.)

A Christian Physician at the Persian Court

An anonymous writer in 555 (see 39) speaks of Christian physicians at the court of King Qubad after his return from exile, i.e. during the period 501-531. The last of these was Gabriel of Nisibin. The Patriarch Yusuf was also a physician.

398 And Yusuf also, the Patriarch of the Christians, has free access to the King, and is attached to him, because he is a physician, and he sits in his presence in the first seat after the Chief of the Magi, and whatever he asks from him, he receives. On account of the Christian physicians attached to him, he shows mercy towards the captives and the Christians.

—Anonymous, 6th Century (Latin in *C.S.C.O.* 3 : 6, p. 218. Y.).

Church and State under Mar Aba the Great, 540-552

There was further fierce persecution of the Church under Yazdgard II (440-457), but in 486 it adopted a semi-Nestorian creed (see 297), and ultimately it separated from the Greek Church (see 289). On the whole, relations between Church and State

⁴ The former decree, plus the recent experience of the rebellion of the bishops, and their condemnation by the Church, are made the basis for this new decree of independence.

were friendly after that, but the threat of persecution was never far off. This is well illustrated by the relations between the great warrior-king Khusrau I (531-579), and the saintly and statesmanlike Patriarch Mar Aba I. (For Mar Aba's conversion see 87. For his enforcement of Church discipline, see 192-193).

The Appointment of Mar Aba as Patriarch

399 He was chosen for the great rule of the Catholicate by all the metropolitans and bishops, and by all the priests and believers who were present in the Cities [Seleucia-Ctesiphon] without his knowledge. They sent boats to fetch him in the name of the King of Kings.

—*Life of Mar Aba* 224 (French in Labourt, *C.E.P.*, p. 170. Y.).

Magian Complaints and Slanders about Christians

400 These Christians destroy our holy Teaching, and teach men to serve one God, and not to honour the sun, or fire. They defile water by their ablutions, they refrain from marriage and the propagation of children, and refuse to go to war with the King of Kings. They have no rules about the slaughter and eating of animals; they bury the corpses of men in the earth. They attribute the origin of snakes and creeping things to a good God. They despise many servants of the King, and teach witchcraft.

—*Royal 'Firman'*, quoted in *Acts of the Martyrs and Saints*, 2: 351 (Wigram, *A.N.**).

Accusations against Mar Aba, and his Arrest, 541

401 When King Anushirwan [Khusrau I] invaded the Greek Empire, Mar Aba, who did not want to see bloodshed, held back from going with him. The Magi, who hated him, accused him before the King of four things:

1. He had renounced the religion of the Magi, and become a Christian.
2. He had prevented Christians from marrying more than one wife at a time.
3. He had annulled the decrees of their judges, and taken away cases from their jurisdiction.
4. He baptised Magi and made them Christians.¹

Thus by these accusations they aroused the King to detest

¹ It is clear from other sources that if Mar Aba had promised not to make further conversions from the Magi, he would have been released.

him; at his orders he was imprisoned for seven years in Azarbaijan.

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard* 2 : 27 (French in *P.O.*, 7 : 158-9. Y.).

Exile as a Prisoner in Azarbaijan, 541-548

- 402** From Azarbaijan he did not cease to direct church affairs, . . . corresponding by letters with all the provinces on the subject of their concerns. The Canons of the Psalter were composed in prison.

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard* 2 : 27. (French in *P.O.* ; 7 : 159. Y.)

- 403** From the provinces assembled the metropolitans, bishops, priests and deacons, and Christian men and women, to pray there and receive his blessing. On account of their sins, many of them stood outside his door in sackcloth and ashes, and received his pardon. Others were consecrated bishops, others again ordained to the priesthood or the diaconate; similarly he conferred other ecclesiastical orders Whole companies of bishops returned home to their colleagues, and sang to them hymns inspired by the Holy Spirit [which they had learned from Mar Aba]; legions of priests were welcomed back by their colleagues, and told of the great wonders they had seen and heard. The mountains and the heights of Azarbaijan seemed to be levelled under the feet of the saints.

—*Life of Mar Aba* 247 (French in Labourt *C.E.P.*, p. 184. Y.).

Escape from Azarbaijan, 548 or 549

A renegade Christian conspired with the Magi to murder Mar Aba, and say he had died in prison.

- 404** Mar Aba, warned of this news, took to flight at night, and presented himself at the King's court. The King, informed of his arrival, sent him a written message: 'Were you not obliged to remain in the place to which I exiled you?' 'If I have run away', replied the Father, . . . 'it was to avoid a violent death. If I had been put to death in secret, against whom could one have taken legal action? . . . If

the King wants, he can have me put to death . . . ' 'Get out !' said the King.

Mar Aba was imprisoned for a while, heavily chained, but later he was allowed to go free, but not to leave the court.

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard* 2:27. (French in *P.O.* 7:159-60. Y.)

The Patriarch is Responsible to the King for his People, 551

A rebellion broke out against the King, led by one of his sons, and supported by some of the Christians. Gundeshapur was captured, and fortified against the King.

405 The Magi raised a clamour before the King because of the Blessed [Mar Aba], and said : ' If the Catholicos had wanted, the rebellion would not have taken place.' They immediately had him heavily chained to the neck of a soldier, and led him to the court of the King of Kings. The King of Kings was annoyed by the accusation of the Magi, and sent a message to him through his Christian servant Zadagu : ' You are against Our Majesty, and because of you the Christians have rebelled. In many provinces and cities, the Christians have risen up against the Magi and the magistrates. They have beaten and plundered them, and now they are organising a rebellion. As for you, although you are under confinement, you consecrate bishops and priests, you send them to the provinces, and you show no kind of respect to us. For this reason I am about to give immediate orders that your eyes should be put out, and that you should be thrown into a ditch and die there !'

—*Life of Mar Aba*, 264. (French in Labourt, *C.E.P.*, p. 189. Y.)

But the King relented, partly as a result of the arrival of ambassadors from the White Huns (see 31). He asked the Patriarch instead to help in pacifying the Christians.

406 ' It is my will ', said the King, ' that you write to the inhabitants of Gundeshapur not to side with this young madman.' The Catholicos wrote and excommunicated them. They separated themselves from the King's son, and opened the gates of Gundeshapur to the royal armies, which were then able to enter. The King and his men were

amazed at this obedience, and this fear of excommunication. They abstained for a short time from hurting the Christians.

But later the King forced Mar Aba to go in person and collect a large money-contribution from the Christians.

—*Chronicle of Sa'ard*, 2 : 27. (French in *P.O.* 7 : 163. Y.)

Mar Aba, worn out by his sufferings over many years, died in 552. He was held in such high respect that many pagans attended his funeral.

Christians on a Peace Embassy, 630

Khusrau II (590-628), the last great Sassanid warrior-king, nearly succeeded in destroying the Byzantine Empire, but in the end was defeated by the Emperor Heraclius. He had a Christian Monophysite wife, and during the last 20 years of his reign he refused to appoint a Patriarch, because the Church was not willing to have a Monophysite.

407 And when Mar Ishu'-Yab [II] was appointed Patriarch [628], King Shiruya persuaded the Catholicos to select from the dominion of the East certain metropolitans and bishops, that they might go up to the territory of the Byzantine Greeks, at the cost and expense of the King, bearing his letters and greetings, saying : ' Let them make to pass away and be blotted out all the discord and enmity which have existed between the Persians and the Greeks, and by their wisdom let them sow peace in the two countries.' Then Mar Ishu'-Yab [took with him the Metropolitans of Nisibin, Arbil, Kirkuk, and certain other bishops]. And thus through Christ our Lord, the Lord of the worlds and the Governor and Guardian of the two countries and of the whole world gave these shepherds mercy in the sight of the Greeks, and they received their assembly and their petition as if they had been the angels of God. Thus those holy men were rewarded for all the care and heavy toil of that long journey, and they returned in peace to this country.

—Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors* 2 : 4 (W.-B.).

The mission reached Constantinople during the reign of Queen Burandukht (630-631). But the Sassanid Empire, weakened by long wars with Rome and internal anarchy, was attacked by the Muslim Arabs in 633. Seleucia-Ctesiphon fell in 638, and with the murder of Yazdgard III in 652 the Sassanid Empire came to an end, and was succeeded by the Muslim Caliphate.

D. THE CHURCH IN ARABIA, INDIA AND CHINA

Persecution by a Jewish Ruler in Arabia, c. 520

The Book of the Himyarites, fragments only of which are extant, was compiled in Syriac in the first half of the 6th century from eye-witness accounts of persecution in Najran. The Christians there were persecuted by Masruq, probably the King of Yemen, and his general, Zu-Yazan. Masruq's mother was a Jewess, and he was a convert to the Jewish faith; many of his followers would be pagan Arabs. The Christians were at various times helped by the Ethiopians. Masruq captured Najran, which surrendered on promise of quarter, but then put the Christian men to death. The following account tells of the martyrdom of the womenfolk.

408 [Masruq said to Zu-Yazan] 'Go and enter Najran and bring together the wives of those rebels who were killed on Friday, and bid them deny Jesus, son of Mary, whom the Christians call Christ. And those who deny shall be Jews with us, and be alive, but those who do not deny shall die as bitterly as their husbands.' . . . They brought together to him the believing freeborn women of Najran whom they found, one hundred and seventy-seven in number. And they brought with them also many children whom they carried. [They were imprisoned.]

And this wicked Zu-Yazan went to them, and stood and spoke with them. . . . 'Now, indeed, what have your husbands benefited, who insisted in this rebellious opinion and did not obey the King and do his will and live? And lo, because they did not obey, they died by the sword, not in war, but as evildoers. . . . So deny then Jesus, son of Mary, whom ye say is Christ. For he is a mortal man like everyone else, and will not do you any good, just as he did your husbands no good. And spit on his cross, and become Jews with us. . . .'

And they said to him everyone: 'God forbid that we should spit on His Cross or that we should treat it with contempt, for by it He has prepared for us redemption from all error. But we abjure the King and thyself and all who agree with you. . . . And we pray that, as our husbands died, we may be deemed worthy to die, we also, for the sake of Christ, God.'

Zu-Yazan reported to Masruq, who ordered them to be brought out to the place where their husbands had been killed, and there put to a painful death.

When this murderer Zu-Yazan received this command, he placed around them a troop of men . . . After that he commanded those Jews who were with him that they should first pierce them with arrows. And immediately they began, these shameless men, to shoot at them and their children, as a man shoots and the arrow [pierces] without pity. When now the arrows were flying continuously in a dense shower from every side, and were piercing them, just like a cloud that pours down hail over a vineyard, those handmaids of Christ lifted up their hands towards heaven, saying :

‘ Christ, God, come to our help ! Oh our Lord, Jesus Christ, behold our oppression in this moment and turn not away from us, but grant in us the power to accomplish this our way by martyrdom for Thy sake, that we may also go and reach our brethren who died for Thy sake. And forgive us our sins, and receive the sacrifice of our lives as acceptable before Thee.’

But those women who had with them little children, set them down on the ground and covered them with their garments, and stood themselves, spreading out their hands to heaven, till suddenly [one] of them was overpowered, . . . and fell to the ground . . . Even when [Zu-Yazan] saw that there was not one of these handmaids of Christ who stood on her feet, but they were all thrown to the ground, wounded by the arrows without pity, and though he also saw their blood, and the blood of their little children too, flowing before them, and heard the sound of their wailing and of their children’s, which was heard at a great distance, he commanded. . . . ‘ Go immediately and make away with them and with their evil children by swords !’ . . . Then these murderers . . . began to slay them with swords without mercy, like the reapers who cut down the ears without sparing, [so that] not a single one of them nor a single child remained alive.

So then these handmaids of God were crowned by a good confession . . . on this same day, Monday [probably 27th November, 523] . . . And those men who told us of their wondrous martyrdom mentioned also to us a few of their names out of many . . .

Humama and . . . Ruhm and her three daughters, and Ama and Jabrah and Aumah and her daughter, and Ruhm and Ushana her sister, and their mother, and Hayya and . . . Jadida and . . . Hasana and Khalila and Fatima and Shalshala's mother and Hint.

The list contains 90 names in all ; the children mentioned are all girls.

—*The Book of the Himyarites*, from pp. 26a-30b (Moberg*).

A Charter for Christian Immigrants in South India, 345

According to Malabar tradition, Thomas Kin'an a merchant, and about 400 foreigners, including Mar Joseph, Bishop of Edessa, and several priests and deacons, came to Malabar in 345, and was granted permission to settle, and a charter of rights, by the King of Malabar. These were inscribed on copper plates, which undoubtedly existed when the Portuguese came to India in 1500. As traders in a land of few merchants, the Christian settlers were accepted into a privileged caste position.

De Gouvea's Account

Antonio de Gouvea, a Portuguese traveller, began his *Journal* in 1599, and had it printed in 1606.

409 [Thomas Kin'an]¹ obtained many privileges and honours for the Christians among whom he lived, and a very spacious ground on which to found a large church, in keeping with the wealth of the founder—all of which he ordered to be inscribed on copper, . . . which one Mar Jacob, Bishop of these Christians, fearing they might be lost, entrusted to the [Portuguese] Factor of Cochin, . . . and in the factory they were kept many years in the charge of the house, until from carelessness they disappeared² . . . The Christians alone, when they married, were allowed to wear the hair of their head tied with a golden flower ; to ride on elephants, a privilege granted only to the heirs of kings ; and to sit on carpets, and other honours which no other caste had.

—Gouvea, *Journal*, folio 4r, column 2 (Joseph, *M.C.*, pp. 3-4*).

¹ 'Kin'an' may mean 'the merchant'. The settlers may well have been refugees from the persecution under Shapur II (see 388-390).

² The plates disappeared in 1544, and have not been seen since.

Abstract of the Contents of the Charter

A Portuguese Jesuit report of 1604 in the British Museum gives an account of the contents of the charter. It is not clear whether this is an imperfect translation of the authentic grant or a seventeenth century version of the tradition. The following is a summary of this, compared with Malabar tradition.

410 *Date*—345, according to Malabar tradition.

Donor—Cheraman Perumal [The Overlord of All Malabar] according to the Malabar tradition.

Cocurangon [The Emperor] according to the Portuguese version.

Donee—Thomas Cananeo, a merchant prince.

Terms—1. Thomas is given the title of Courangon Cananeo, which probably means The Emperor's Merchant.

2. He is given also the city of Kranganur and a jungle close by, which he converts into a town with a church and 62 houses.

3. He is granted the privilege of using seven kinds of musical instruments, a palanquin, and an elephant as a vehicle.

4. 'Dignity' is conferred upon him—probably the title of 'mapilla', or 'son-in-law to the King'.

5. He and his posterity, associates and relations, as well as the followers of his faith [i.e. Malabar Christians] are granted five kinds of taxes.

Place—The document was executed while the King was in Karnellur (Kranganur).

—*British Museum Add. MSS.* 9853, pp. 525-37. (English in *Kerala Society Papers* 4 : 180-182. Summary in Joseph, *M.C.*, App. I*.)

Royal Patronage for Christian Monks in China, 638

411 In the seventh month of the twelfth Cheng-kuan year [between 12th August and 15th September, 638] a decree was made, saying :

The Way has no immutable name, sages have no unchanging method. Teaching is found to suit the land that

all the living may be saved. The Persian monk Alo-pen, bringing Scriptures and teaching from far, has come to offer them at the Capital City. The meaning of the teaching has been carefully examined: it is mysterious, wonderful, calm; it fixes the essentials of life and perfection; it is the salvation of living beings, it is the wealth of man. It is right that it should spread through the Empire. Therefore let the local officials build a monastery in the I-ning quarter with twenty-one regular monks.

—*Imperial Rescripts of the T'ang Dynasty*, ch. 49, folio 10v. (Moule, C.C., p. 65).

E. THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

Jesus said that the Kingdom of God was like leaven (Luke 13 : 20-21)—influencing and changing its environment, yet taking something from it too. In the early Church, many Christians sought to serve God in the world. But it was all too easy for worldliness to creep into the church, and other Christians, equally sincere, sought to serve God in a life separate from the world.

I. THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD—THEORY AND PRACTICE

The Church in the World is like the Soul in the Body

412 Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind by country, or by speech, or by dress. For they do not dwell in cities of their own, or use a different language, or practise a peculiar life But while they dwell in Greek or barbarian cities according as each man's lot has been cast, and follow the customs of the land in clothing and food, and other matters of daily life, yet the condition of citizenship which they exhibit is wonderful, and admittedly strange. They live in countries of their own, but simply as sojourners ; they share the life of the citizens, they endure the lot of foreigners ; every foreign land is to them a fatherland, and every fatherland a foreign land. They marry like the rest of the world, they breed children, but they do not cast their offspring adrift.¹ They have a common table, but yet not common [polluted]. They exist in the flesh, but they do not live after the flesh. They spend their existence upon earth, but their citizenship is in heaven. They obey the established laws, and in their own lives they surpass the laws. They love all men, and are persecuted by all They do good, and are punished as evil-doers ; and in their punishment they rejoice as gaining new life in it. The Jews war against them as aliens, and the Greeks persecute them ; and those that hate them can state no grounds for their enmity.

In a word, what the soul is in the body the Christians are in the world. The soul is spread through all the members of the body, and Christians through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but it is not of the body ; Christians dwell in the world, but they are not of the

¹ The Romans commonly exposed unwanted children.

world The soul when it is stinted of food and drink thrives the better ; so Christians when they are punished increase daily all the more. So great is the position to which God has appointed them, and which it is not lawful for them to refuse.

—*Epistle to Diognetus* 5 : 1-2, 4-11, 16-17 and 6 : 1-3, 9-10. (Radford—S.*)

The Church is like a Colony of the Heavenly Jerusalem

413 The heavenly city, while on pilgrimage on earth, calls its citizens from every race, and collects its pilgrim band from among all tongues, caring nothing for differences in customs, laws, and ways of life, by which earthly peace is either sought or attained, not withdrawing from or breaking anything of it all, but preserving and observing it rather. For there may be differences in different nations, making for the one end of heavenly peace, if they do not hinder religion This peace, the heavenly city while on pilgrimage enjoys already in faith, and by that faith it lives righteously, since whatever it performs of good actions towards God and neighbour do concern the peace to be aspired to yonder

‘Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord’ [Psalm 144 : 15]. Wretched then is the people which is stranger to this God. Yet they have a peace of their own, not to be set at naught, but shall not have it at the last, since meanwhile they misuse it. That they should have it in this life benefits us also.

—Augustine, *The City of God*, 19 : 17 and 26 (W.T.C.).

Christians are not Anti-Social

414 We . . . are accused of being useless in the affairs of life. How in all the world can that be the case with people who are living among you, eating the same food, wearing the same clothes, having the same habits, submitting to the same necessities of life ? We are not Indian Brahmins . . . who dwell in woods and exile themselves from ordinary human life We live with you in the world, and we do not keep away from forum, butcher’s shop, bath, booth,

workshop, inn, weekly market, or any other places of commerce. We sail with you, and fight with you, and till the ground with you Even in the various arts we make public property of our works for your benefit

At any rate, you say, the temple revenues are every day falling off : how few now throw in a contribution ! Our compassion spends more in the streets than yours does in the temples. But your other taxes will acknowledge a debt of gratitude to Christians ; for in the honesty which keeps us from cheating a brother, we make it a matter of conscience to pay all that is due

I will confess, however, without hesitation, that there are some who in a sense may complain that Christians are a sterile race—for instance, pimps, panders and bath suppliers ;¹ assassins, poisoners and sorcerers ; soothsayers too, diviners and astrologers ! But it is a noble fruit of Christians, that they have no fruits for such as these In your long lists of those accused of many and varied atrocities, has any assassin, any pick-pocket, any man guilty of sacrilege, or seduction, or stealing bathers' clothes, had his name entered as being a Christian too ? It is from you that the exhibitors of gladiatorial shows always get their herds of criminals to feed up for the occasion. You will find no Christian there, except simply as being such ; or if one is there as something else, a Christian he is no more.

—Tertullian, *Apology*, from 42-44 (*A.—N.C.L.**).

¹The Roman baths were notorious for homosexuality.

Christian Love going out to the World in Time of Need

At times of pestilence, in Carthage, Alexandria and other places, Christians risked their lives to help the sick. The following passage describes a pestilence in Carthage in 252, just after the Decian persecution.

- 415 A dreadful pestilence broke out, . . . and the extraordinary ravages of a hateful sickness entered house after house of the trembling populace in succession, carrying off with sudden violence numberless people daily, each from his own home. There was a general panic, flight, shrinking from the infection, unnatural exposure of infected friends—

as though to carry the dying out of doors were to rid oneself of death itself. Meanwhile multitudes lay about the whole city, . . . and called out on the pity of passers-by. . . . No one looked to aught beyond his own cruel gain. . . . No one did to another what he wished done to himself.

But Cyprian, the Christian Bishop, gathered the Christians, and told them that they had now a practical opportunity of loving those who had persecuted them.

Accordingly, ways of serving were allotted among them at once, according to the rank and circumstances of each. Many who from stress of poverty were unable to undertake expenses, undertook more than expenses, by their personal toil doing other services more precious than all riches. . . . They did good. . . . 'to all', and not only 'to the household of faith' [Galatians 6 : 10].

—Pontius, *Life of Cyprian*, 9 and 10 (L.F.—S.*).

Christian Wife and Pagan Husband

A real problem for the early Church was: how far could a Christian wife go, in living with a pagan husband? Often it was the wife who was converted.

- 416 A certain woman lived with a licentious husband; she herself had formerly been licentious too. But when she came to the knowledge of the teachings of Christ she became sober-minded, and endeavoured to persuade her husband likewise to be temperate, citing the teaching of Christ, and assuring him that there shall be punishment in eternal fire inflicted upon those who do not live temperately and with right reason. But he continued in the same excesses, and alienated his wife by his actions.

She sought divorce, but was persuaded to go on living with him, in the hope that she might win him to a better life. But it was in vain.

When her husband had gone to Alexandria, and was reported to be conducting himself worse than ever, she—that she might not, . . . by sharing his bed and his board, become a partaker also in his wickednesses and impieties—

gave him what you call a 'bill of divorce', and was separated from him. But . . . her husband—while he ought to have been rejoicing that she had now given up those actions which formerly she unhesitatingly committed with the slaves and the hirelings, when she delighted in drunkenness and every vice, and that she desired that he too should give up the same—when she had gone from him against his will, brought an accusation against her stating that she was a Christian.

—Justin Martyr, *II Apology* 2 (A.—N.C.L.—S.*).

It was clearly unwise, as well as wrong, for a Christian woman to marry a pagan.

- 417 If [an early morning service] is to be attended, the husband at daybreak makes an appointment with his wife to meet him at the baths; if there are fasts to be kept, the husband that same day holds a convivial banquet; if a charitable expedition is to be made, never was family business more urgent. For who would allow his wife, for the sake of visiting the brethren, to go round from street to street, to other men's—and indeed to all the poorer—cottages, [or] endure her absence all the night long at the Easter solemnities? . . . Who will allow her to creep into prison to kiss a martyr's bonds—or indeed to meet any one of the brethren and exchange a kiss with him! . . . If a pilgrim brother should arrive, what hospitality would he find in an alien home?

—Tertullian, *To his Wife* 4 (A.—N.C.L.*).

2. THE WORLD IN THE CHURCH—WORLDLINESS

Growing Worldliness of the Church before Diocletian's Persecution

418 How great, how unique were the honour, and liberty too, which before the persecution of my time were granted by all men, Greeks and non-Greeks alike, to the message given through Christ to the world! . . . Witness the goodwill so often shown by potentates to our people; they even put into their hands the government of provinces, releasing them from the agonising question of sacrificing [to the gods] in view of the friendliness with which they regarded their teaching . . . Did not [the Emperors] permit the members of their households—consorts, children, and servants¹—to embrace boldly before their eyes the Divine message and way of life? . . . Did they not . . . favour them more than their fellow-servants? [Examples are given]. And what approbation the rulers in every church unmistakably won from all procurators and governors! How could one describe the mass meetings, the enormous gatherings in every city, and the remarkable congregations in places of worship? No longer satisfied with the old buildings, they raised from the foundations in all cities churches spacious in plan. . . .

But increasing freedom transformed our character to arrogance and sloth; we began envying and abusing each other; rulers hurled themselves at rulers and laymen waged party fights against laymen, and unspeakable hypocrisy and dissimulation were carried to the limits of wickedness. . . . Those who were supposed to be pastors cast off the restraining influence of the fear of God and quarrelled heatedly with each other, engaged solely in swelling the disputes, threats, envy, and mutual hostility and hate, frantically demanding the despotic power they coveted.

Then, in 303, God used the fires of persecution to judge and purify His Church.

—Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 8 : 1. 1-4 (W.).

¹ Including the wife and daughter of Diocletian himself.

Worldliness in the Persian Church before Shapur's Persecution

Afrahat, writing in 346, gives glimpses in the following passages of conditions preceding the persecution of 339-379.

- 419 When men receive from us the laying on of hands, they pay attention to nothing else. In our days, it is not easy to find someone who asks: 'Who is the God-fearing man?' More often it is: 'Who is the senior ordained man?' And whenever the reply comes 'It is so-and-so', they say to him: 'You must occupy the best seat!'

Shall we consider [the Patriarch's] lofty stature—like that of Saul? And his handsome looks—comparable to those of Eliab?¹ Or his remarkable beauty—which reminds us of Absalom's? No. God is not satisfied with a pleasing outward appearance, and He does not love the proud and those who seek glory. . . .

If anyone does wrong, and has the luck to please the 'Prison Authorities', they release him from his chains, and say: 'God is merciful. He gives you remission of sins. Enter, take part in the Prayer.' But if someone has displeased them, even just a little, they say to him: 'You are bound and accursed by heaven and earth. Cursed also be anyone who speaks a word to you!'

—Afrahat, *Demonstration* 14 (Parisot cols. 633, 648 and 708. French in Labourt, *C.E.P.* 24-27. Y.)

¹ David's elder brother. See I Samuel 16:6-7.

Party Politics in Rome, 366

The following is an account, by a partisan of Ursinus, of what happened in Rome after the death of Pope Liberius.

- 420 Then the presbyters and deacons, Ursinus, Amantius and Lupus, with the holy people who had kept faith with Liberius while he was in exile, began to make procession in the Julian Basilica [Church], and asked that the deacon Ursinus should be ordained as their Pontiff in the place of Liberius; but the faithless ones, at the Basilica of Lucina, demanded Damasus as their Bishop. . . . Paul, Bishop of Tibur, consecrated Ursinus. When Damasus, who had

always been ambitious for the See, discovered this, he stirred up by bribery all the carriage-drivers and the ignorant mob and, armed with sticks, he broke into the Julian Basilica and rioted there for three days, with much slaughter of the faithful. A week later he took possession of the Lateran Basilica with all the faithless party and with the gladiators whom he corrupted with large bribes, and there he was ordained Bishop. By bribing Viventius the Governor of Rome and Julian the Prefect he secured the exile of the venerable Ursinus, who had been ordained Pontiff first, together with the deacons Amantius and Lupus. After this, Damasus began to use force upon the laity of Rome who would not join him, beating them with sticks and attacking them in other ways. His officers took seven presbyters, whom he tried to expel from Rome, but the faithful people met these presbyters, rescued them and took them at once to the Basilica of Liberius. Then Damasus and his band of traitors gathered the gladiators and drivers and grave-diggers and all the clergy, with axes and swords and clubs, and besieged the Basilica at eight in the morning on October 26th, and stirred up a serious conflict. He broke down the doors, set fire to the porch, . . . and tried to find a place by which to break in. Some of his servants began to unroof the Basilica and to kill the faithful people with the tiles. Then all Damasus' party broke into the basilica, killed 160 of the people, men and women, and wounded a very large number, of whom many died.

—*Collection of Avella*, 1:4-7. *C.S.E.L.* 35:1, pp. 2-3 (Greenslade, *S.E.C.**).

The pagan contemporary writer Ammianus Marcellinus speaks of the same conflict, blames both Damasus and Ursinus, and gives his opinion as to why it went to such extremes.

- 421 I do not deny, when I consider the ostentation that reigns in Rome, that those who desire such rank and power may be justified in labouring with all possible exertion and vehemence to obtain their wishes; since, after they have succeeded, they will be secure for the future, being enriched by offerings from rich ladies, riding in carriages, dressing splendidly, and feasting luxuriously, so that their entertainments surpass even royal banquets.

Their lives contrast very unfavourably with those of the bishops in the country districts.

... whom the most rigid abstinence in eating and drinking, and plainness of apparel, and eyes always cast on the ground, recommend to the everlasting Deity and His true worshippers as pure and sober-minded men.

—Ammianus Marcellinus, *Current Events* 27 : 3. 14-15 (Yonge*).

Lordliness of Patriarchs in Constantinople, 381

Gregory of Nazianzus, who had failed to secure appointment to the See of Constantinople, here refers sarcastically to his unfitness for the post.

- 422 Perhaps we may be reproached, as we have been before, with [shortcomings in] the exquisite character of our table, the splendour of our apparel, the officers who precede us, our haughtiness to those who meet us. I was not aware that we ought to rival the consuls, the governors, the most illustrious generals, ... or that our belly ought to hunger for the enjoyment of the goods of the poor, and to expend their necessities on superfluities, and belch forth over the altars [as a result of overeating]. I did not know that we ought to ride on splendid horses, and drive in magnificent carriages, and be preceded by a procession and surrounded by applause, and have everyone make way for us, as if we were wild beasts ! ... Elect another who will please the majority ; and give me my desert, my country life, and my God, whom alone I may have to please, and shall please, by my simple life.

—Gregory of Nazianzus, *Orations* 42 : 24 (*N. & P.—N.F.*).

The Worldliness of a Patriarch of the East

The following incident took place early in the 8th Century, but is an interesting example of a different kind of worldliness.

- 423 Saliba-Zakha [712-728] ... was an avaricious and a haughty man. And when he heard of the golden Book of the Gospels ... bequeathed to this our monastery, he came with all his insolent pride to take it and to carry it away with him to [Seleucia]. And when he had come into the monastery and this assembly had received him joyfully, even as they were wont to receive the other Patriarchs who

had come for the worship and honour of the place, he demanded of the Rabban Yusuf, the head of the monastery, that he should bring to him that Book that he might rejoice in the sight of it. Now when he had done so—for he had no power to withhold it, and moreover, he did not comprehend what was in the heart of the Catholicos—he brought the Book from the library and gave it into his hands. And when the Catholicos saw the splendour and beauty of the Book, which was ornamented with pure gold, and precious stones, he was devoured by his desire for it, and he took it, and laid it in his wallet [saddle-bags?]. Then the head of the monastery answered and said to him, 'You are not acting rightly in taking our Book in this iniquitous manner.' And the Catholicos said: 'You solitary monks have no need of this Book, therefore let the believers enjoy it!' and straightway he commanded those that were with him to set out on their way quickly.

Now when this had taken place, the board for summoning the congregation was struck, and those among the ascetics who were young and strong ran after the Catholicos and stopped him, . . . and they prevailed against him with stones and sticks. And when they had come up with him they threw him off his mule, and they buffeted him with outspread hands and closed fists in an unseemly manner, although they had it in their power to take the Book without striking a blow . . . And when the aged Elders heard what had been done to him by the novices, they gathered themselves together and went forth to appease the Catholicos, and they began to apologise for what had taken place without their knowledge and consent; and in this manner they pacified Saliba-Zakha, and he departed from them.

—Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors*, 2 : 27 (W.—B.*).

THE CHURCH OUT OF THE WORLD— MONASTICISM

Monasticism began as a reaction against worldliness in the Church. St. Antony (250-352) was the pioneer of solitary monasticism, and Pachomius (c. 292-346) of monastic communities. Both lived in Egypt. The great leader and organiser of Eastern Monasticism, however, was Basil the Great (329-379), while in the West it was Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-544). In Persia it was Abraham of Kashkar (c. 502-596) whose monastic rules were followed. Monks in general made the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Monasticism played a great part in preserving learning in Europe, and was often a great missionary force. See, for example 43-45, 60.

Life in a Monastery of Pachomius

- 424 The sick are attended with wonderful devotion, food being made ready for them in plenty ; those in good health practise a stricter abstinence. Twice a week, on the fourth and the sixth day of the week, they fast entirely : except at Easter and Pentecost. On other days, those who wish to do so take their meal after midday : so too at supper the table is laid . . . Some eat but little at the second meal ; others are satisfied with but one meal, be it luncheon or supper. Not a few just take a bite of bread, and then go out. All take their meals together. If any one does not wish to come to table, he has an allowance, in his cell, of bread and water only, with salt, for one day or two, according as he desires.

Brethren of the same trade are lodged in one house under one provost [for example weavers, mat-makers, tailors, carpenters, laundrymen, and shoemakers]. And week by week an account of their work is rendered to the abbot of the monastery.

—Jerome, *Preface to the Rule of St. Pachomius*, 5 and 6 (K. 2).

Afrahat's Advice to Solitary Monks, 337

- 425 Before all things it becomes the man on whom the yoke is laid, that his faith should be firm, . . . that he should be zealous in fasting and prayer ; and that he should be fervent

in the love of Christ ; and should be humble and mild and wise. And let his speech be peaceful and pleasant, and his thought be sincere with all. Let him speak his words duly weighing them, and set a barrier to his mouth from harmful words, and let him put far from him hasty laughter. Let him not love the adornments of garments, nor again does it become him to let his hair grow long and adorn it with sweet-scented unguents . . . Let him not dare to exceed at wine. Let him put far from him proud thoughts . . . The words that are spoken about a man, when he about whom they are spoken is not near, let him not hear or receive, that he sin not, until he search them out . . . Let him not lend and take interest . . . Let him suffer wrong and do no wrong . . . Let him not scorn any man who is repenting of his sins, and let him not mock his brother who is fasting, and him that cannot fast let him not put to shame . . . In an acceptable time let him speak his word ; otherwise let him be silent . . . Let him not for his belly's sake make himself despised by his begging . . . When he has, and gives to the poor, let him rejoice ; and when he has not, let it not grieve him . . .

These things beseech solitaries who take up the heavenly yoke, and become disciples of Christ.

—Afrahat, *Demonstrations* 6:8 (N. & P.—N.F.).

Basil the Great describes Monastic Life c. 360

426 We try to keep our minds at peace. An eye which is always gazing here and there, left and right, up and down, can never see clearly what lies before it, and it is the same with the mind. I mean that, for example, in the world an unmarried man is always being upset by unruly desires, and a married man exchanges these for a host of other worries. If he has no children he hankers after them, while if he has they cause him a lifetime of anxiety—all this added to the hurly-burly of the world's business. What can one do, but separate oneself from the world ? But do not misunderstand me. Withdrawal from the world is not a physical removal from it ; it is the separation of the soul from bondage to the body. This involves leaving one's home, possessions, friends and all the rest ; but it brings with it the capacity to receive in the heart the impressions placed there by God's own instruction. This means unlearning a good deal of

teaching that may be already there ; you can't write on wax without erasing what has previously been written on it. Solitude helps here, because it calms the passions and gives an opportunity to reason to release the soul from dependence on them.

The beginning of the soul's purgation is tranquillity—where the tongue takes a rest from gossip and the eye from licentiousness and the ear from buffoonery—this last I particularly welcome ! Thus set free, the mind can become occupied with the cultivation of all the virtues, and with the thought of the glory of God.

The study of the Bible is the best guide to the discernment of one's duty. What with moral precept and the example of good men so abundantly set forth there, you have all you want. What better encouragement to chastity is there than the story of Joseph ? Where will you learn humility better than from Job ? or courage, better than from David ? Or the true Christian mind—courage together with humility—where is that better set forth than in Moses ?

Such reading always moves you to prayer. Prayer has this priceless reward, that it forms in you a distinct idea of God. We ought to cultivate the high felicity of becoming temples of God—God always living in us. There is no better weapon against the disturbances of passion than that.

From this proceed all sorts of details of practice. We prefer to be careful to avoid frivolity in conversation, to learn to ask questions without contentiousness, to answer without self-display. We should not interrupt the speaker when he is saying anything profitable, nor be eager to throw in our own words in order to appear clever. We should neither be too proud to learn nor too impatient to teach. We should take care, when we have learned something from someone else, not to pass off the idea as our own, but to give credit where it is due. In conversation it is best to use a moderate tone of voice, neither mumbling nor shouting. Think first, speak second. Be affable and agreeable in all conversation ; smart wisecracks are a poor way of gaining popularity ; we should depend on a gracious habit. In rebuke we try to avoid roughness and to do all in a context of Christian humility.

We tend to express this abasement of ourselves in a somewhat grave demeanour. If our eye is downcast, our out-

ward appearance unkempt and our clothes often in need of cleaning or patching, it is not, as it would be in secular life, in affectation of public mourning. It is because our minds are on these inner things. We are in our way particular about dress. We keep our tunic in place with a girdle, but we do not wear this so high that we look dandified, nor so loose as to look like tramps. When we walk, we seek to express neither sluggishness in lounging, nor brashness in hurrying. We are not interested in brightly coloured clothing, but only a fool would come and live out here in anything but good, thick wool. We eat what is good for us, bread and vegetables, and we drink water. Anxious gluttony is, of course, quite out of place. We do not neglect to think of God as we eat, preferring to make the food itself an occasion for glorifying Him. Before meals we remember God's promises; after them, we give thanks.

Heavy sleep is not our habit; our diet makes it unnecessary anyhow. Our kind of light sleep is also much more refreshing. Midnight is our cock-crow; midnight is a grand time for quiet recollection of the glory of God, and for invoking His help against all the things a man has to contend with.

—Basil, *Letters 2* (Abridged and paraphrased by Routley, *The Wisdom of the Fathers*, pp. 98-101).

For the story of Basil's conversion and call to monastic life see 81 and 82. Note that Basil also stressed manual work.

The Canons of Persian Monasticism, c. 550

Like the teaching of Basil, these canons lay a much greater stress on solitude and silence than Western monastic rules. Most of the following canons begin by citing Scripture and the Fathers. The first citations are given in full.

427 The Canons which were laid down by Mar Abraham the Great, the Head of the ascetics of all Persia.

1. First of all, a life of tranquillity according to the command of the Fathers, and according to the word of the Apostle when he spoke to the Thessalonians, 'I ask from you, O my brethren, that ye abound more and more, and that ye study to be quiet, and to be occupied in your own matters' [I Thessalonians 4: 10-11]. And again he spoke

to them : ' We command and entreat you by our Lord Jesus Christ that ye labour in quietness, and eat your bread ' [II Thessalonians 3 : 12]. And again Isaiah said : ' The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the labour of righteousness quietness ' [Isaiah 32 : 17]. And again Father Antony said : ' When a fish is taken out of water it dies. Even so does the solitary who is brought out of his cell. ' And again the holy Mark the solitary said : ' If the body be not quiet, the mind cannot be quiet. ' Quietness then is preserved by these two means, quiet reading and prayer, or by the labour of the hands and meditation, according to what Father Isaiah spoke, and what the Wise Man spoke, that ' idleness begetteth a multitude of evils ' [Proverbs 18 : 9 ?], and again, ' The man who doeth no work is at all times cast into lust ' [Proverbs 21 : 25 ?]. Therefore let us be constant in our cells in quietness, and let us flee from idleness, . . . being firmly persuaded that if we allow it to remain it will be impossible for us either to bear leaves or to yield fruit, if indeed it does not happen that we be altogether cut off from the life of the fear of God.

2. [Fasting] is the origin of a multitude of virtues, and a guide to true life.

3. Prayer, reading, and recital of the Offices are to be carried out seven times a day.

4. Of silence, and of meekness, and of solitude, and of how a man should not intrude speech when his brethren are talking, and of how he should speak with a gentle voice and not with noise and anger [Scripture and Fathers have spoken]. Let us . . . be careful to fulfil these things with all our might, for Divine helps are hidden within them, and without them we are not able to please God.

5. During the Forty Days' Fast a brother shall not go outside his cell without necessity, or without the permission of the community.

6. A brother shall have no right to tour about among the monasteries, or in the towns and villages, unless it be because of sickness, or by the permission of the community ; he shall not, moreover, pay visits among the homes or eat meals with believers. Briefly, no man shall have the right to leave his cell and go forth to any place without the permission of the head of his monastery.

7. Murmuring and slander are to be avoided.

8. On the first day of the week, when the brethren are gathered together, whoever comes first to the church shall take the Holy Book, and shall sit in the place which is set apart for the purpose, and meditate [aloud] upon it until all his brethren have arrived, so that when each of them comes his mind may be laid hold upon by the hearing of the reading, and that they turn not aside to talking about matters which are alien, or to stories and rumours about battles and wars, or to conversation about worldly matters, or to vain stories which do harm to the soul, or to what is foreign to this life of excellence.

9. Fasting is to be excused only on grounds of sickness, hospitality to strangers, a long journey, or prolonged hard manual labour.

10. When brethren come and they are accepted, let them be tried three years in the monastery, and then, if they have behaved in a fitting manner, the brethren shall give them permission to build cells for themselves, or if the community has the means, let them give them the usual help. If there are empty cells, let them be given to them. If, on the other hand, they have not behaved in a seemly way, let them be dismissed and go their way in peace.

11. If any man notices that his brother despises any one of the above rules, . . . let him not report the matter among his brethren, and trouble them, or to the head of the monastery to worry him—for a troublesome word troubles the heart of a man—but let him call him, and speak to him privately ; . . . and if he does not improve, rebuke him before two or three, and if he still does not improve, let him be admonished before the whole community ; and if he does not accept correction from the whole community, let him know that he is an alien to our congregation [compare Matthew 18 : 15-17].

—*Canons of Abraham of Kashkar*. Mai 10, pp. 290ff. (Wallis-Budge in Introduction pp. cxxxiv-cxl to Thomas of Marga's *Book of Governors**).

God's Call is not always to Asceticism !

The following is a copy of a letter sent by the Nestorian Patriarch Shila (505-523), himself a married man, to Yusuf, Metropolitan of Hedayab, who wanted to abandon his see and become a solitary monk. Yusuf accepted the advice.

428 To the Friend of Christ, Mar Yusuf, Bishop Metropolitan of Hedayab ; Shila, Bishop Patriarch by the command and will of God, bows before your Serenity and asks your prayers.

Your Serenity knows better than I do, that God prepares people for heaven and brings them to a worthy goal in different ways : some among them by asceticism, while they are far from all the tumult and noise of the world ; others, by the chaste estate of evangelical marriage, even while they are bound by love to their wives, and their hearts are divided, and they care for their children, to bring them up in the fear of God ; others again, by means of high office, while they direct God's people and guide them in the way of righteousness, pasturing them by their strength—to these last is promised a greater reward and a larger recompense, for he who has the office of doing and teaching will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven, as our Lord says [Matthew 5 : 19]. Others are prepared in different ways. Your Serenity knows also that asceticism is incompatible with marriage, as it is also with high office, because it prevents men from fulfilling the duties attached to them

Because you have been called to the elevated rank of high office—the ten talents [Matthew 25 : 28]—it is not right for you, by the word of our Lord, to become a solitary and oppose yourself to the duties of your office. Remember, O Most Serene, that the will of God has been shown to you by the unanimous agreement of the love of all the people entrusted to you, who want you back as Bishop and guide. You know that if you behave like this, disorder will be sown among these people, and you will be opposing the will of God. This is a bad thing to do, because it is our duty to prevent disorder and the contravention of the will of God. Who knows—even if it is far from my thought !—whether this idea may not have come from the Prince of Darkness ? The Enemies of all mankind love to divert men of God from the right way, using ideas that are good in themselves, but opposed to perfection. Do we not see an incalculable number of men of God being daily induced to enter the accursed sect of the Messalians,¹ and being led astray into error ?

For these reasons and other similar ones, we ordain and decree, in the name of our Lord and by the power of the

¹ A sect of mendicant ascetics who were frequently accused of licentiousness,

Holy Spirit, that you return to your former office, that your people may be your joy, and that you may be the joy of your own. Pray for my weakness, that the Lord may pardon my shortcomings. Keep yourself on fire with the love of our Lord !

—Mashiha-Zakha, *Chronicle of Arbil*, pp. 70-72 (French in Mingana, S.S. I, pp. 151-153. Y.).

A Clash between Monasticism and Christian Education

In the West particularly, but also in the East, monasteries were often centres of Christian education. But it was possible at times in the East for the call to the solitary life to clash with the needs of education, as the following incident shows. The Patriarch Ishu'-Yab III (650-660) had formerly been himself a monk in the monastery of Bait-Abe.

- 429 Mar Ishu'-Yab wanted to build a school near his cell, and to provide it with all that was necessary, and to bring to it teachers and masters and expositors, and to gather together many scholars and to provide for them in all things. And he had made up his mind, and resolved and decided to carry out this work in such a way that for every child who was trained and instructed in the school, the monastery might be near at hand for him to become a novice, so that the school and the monastery might become one—the school to produce and rear scholars, and the monastery to teach and sanctify them for the labours of the ascetic life. And he brought workmen and builders to build what he wanted.

Now when the holy Rabban Kam-Ishu', the head of the monastery, and a large gathering of brethren of his own opinion and manner of life saw what the Catholicos was doing, that he was preparing to bring uproar and noise upon them, [they begged him to desist], saying :

'It is not good for us monks, while we are living in our cells, to be disturbed by the sound of the chanting of the Psalms and the singing of the Hymns and the Offices, and by the noise of the voices of the schoolboys and those who keep watch Cease then from trying to make us schoolboys again, and let every man stay in his cell, and let every man read by himself. If, however, you want to build a

school, . . . the whole land of Persia is your dominion . . . If you build a school here, we shall all go away.'

And Mar Catholicos said to them : ' You need not be angry over a matter that would bring you honour. [Study of the Scriptures and contemplation are both good, and both should have their place, and go together]. And, moreover, I have the power, . . . because, spiritually, I am Master of all monasteries and convents . . . Therefore, by the word of our Lord, cease being obstacles to the work.'

Ishu'-Yab persisted, and the monks left, but in a vision the Patriarch was told that he had been mistaken. He accepted the rebuke, invited the monks to return, and built his school in another place.

—Thomas of Marga, *The Book of Governors*, 2:7-10 (W.-B. *).

VI. POSTSCRIPT

THE CHURCH OF THE EAST IN 650

Important and reliable contemporary evidence of the state of the Church of the East, and especially of the Metropolitan Province of Fars, which included at that time Fars and Kerman north of the Persian Gulf, Qatar and Oman south of it, Bahrain and other islands in it, India and possibly Ceylon, is available in the letters of Ishu'-Yab III, Patriarch of the East from 650-660, concerning the rebellion and schism of Shim'un, Metropolitan Bishop of Riwardashir. The Syriac text of these letters has been edited by the French scholar, Rubens Duval, in *C.S.C.O.*, Second Series, Volume 23. A Latin translation is supplied on pages 179-204 of the same volume.

The letters are eight in number, and are Nos. 14-21 of the letters written by Ishu'-Yab as Patriarch. They are addressed as follows :

14. To Shim'un, Metropolitan of Riwardashir.
15. To a learned Doctor in Riwardashir.
16. To the Metropolitan, Bishops, Clergy and Christians of the Province of Fars.
17. To the Bishops of Qatar.
- 18 and 19. To the People of Qatar.
- 20 and 21. To the Monks of Qatar.

The order of the letters is more or less chronological ; they cover a period of at least a year, perhaps two—possibly the years 650-652, during which the Muslims were completing the conquest of the Sassanid Empire, which had begun in 633.

Apart from Mingana's translation of three short extracts—from Letter 14, paras. 7 and 8, and Letter 21, para. 5—these letters have not appeared in English. Biographical information about Ishu'-Yab, and English translations of some of his earlier letters, is available in Wallis Budge's edition of Thomas of Marga, *Book of Governors*, Vol. I, pages 77-82 and 84-97.

The translations which follow have been made from the Latin of Duval, and the references give first the Letter No., then the para. no., and finally the Latin translation page reference.

Apostasy in Oman and Disruption in Kerman

In his first letter to Shim'un, Ishu'-Yab speaks of the state of Oman and Kerman. It is clear that in Oman the Christians had gone over to Islam without a struggle. What had happened in Kerman is not so clear: the Church there had evidently been led astray by an upstart leader, and the loss of 'sanctuaries' suggests that congregations and church buildings had gone over to the impostor.

430 Where are your sons, O father forsaken? Where are your sanctuaries, O priest cast out? Where is the vast population of Mazon [Oman]¹? They have not been compelled by sword, or fire, or torments, but merely seized with a desire for the half of their own possessions! Mad!—for apostasy has straightway swallowed them up, and they are destroyed for ever, while two . . . only, so-called priests,² have escaped from the flame of impiety and have been brought to nought. Alas! alas! From so many thousands of men called Christians, not one least offering is made to God as fitting sacrifice for our true Faith!

Where, too, are the sanctuaries of Kerman, and of all Fars?

They did not wait to be attacked, or for State pressure to change their Faith, but were misled and overthrown by an upstart impostor.

The very man who led you astray, and turned your churches upside down, had appeared first among us in the region of Radan,³ where there are more pagans than Christians, but yet, because the life of the Christians shone so brightly, he has not even misled the very pagans, but he was driven away from here in disgrace. Not only did he fail to overthrow churches; he himself was overthrown instead! This less-than-a-nobody your province of Fars, with its pagans and Christians, has received, and he himself has rendered them

¹ Here and elsewhere in the letters the Syriac is *Maron*. Mingana notes that *Mazon* is frequently written this way in Syriac literature. In the records of Synods of the Church of the East, the first mention of a Bishop of Mazon is 424, the last 676. Stephen, the Bishop in 676, was probably little more than titular.

² From the reference in 431 below, it is clear that they were bishops. In both cases Ishu'-Yab calls them 'smouldering sticks', suggesting that their fire had gone out!

³ North of Ctesiphon, on the East bank of the Tigris. See 87.

as he would—the pagans in agreement, and the Christians silent and acquiescing.

Nevertheless those very Arabs, to whom God has granted the rule of the lands at this time, lo ! they are in our part of the country, as you know ; but they not only refrain from attacking our religion. They even commend our Faith, honour the priests and saints of our God, and confer benefits on churches and monasteries !⁴

Why, then, have your people of Mazon given up their faith because of them ? And that when the Arabs, as the people of Mazon themselves admit, did not compel them to give up their religion, but ordered them to give up merely half of their possessions⁵ in order to keep their Faith ! But they have forsaken the Faith which brings eternal benefit, to keep half of the possessions of this transient age. A Faith, which all peoples have purchased and purchase still by shedding their life-blood, and by which they obtain the inheritance of eternal life, your people of Mazon would not purchase for half of their possessions !

—Ishu‘-Yab III, *Letter* 14 : 2, 6 and 7 (Latin pp. 179-182).

⁴ Compare Mari’s account (446) which makes it clear that Ishu‘-Yab did not get all this favour for nothing!

⁵ This demand was much more severe than the usual *jizya* (poll-tax) charged by Muslims from religious minorities, and should be noted.

Writing to their neighbours, the people of Qatar, Ishu‘-Yab speaks sadly of the condition of Oman.

- 43^I Indeed the faith of the Christians there [in the province of Fars] was not what it ought to be. By a small puff of Southern heat¹ it has been sadly set on fire, and has been given over to everlasting perdition, while no Christian tribe there offers to Almighty God the customary sacrifices by testimony of blood ; and out of the thousands and tens of thousands who belong to our God, two . . . who keep the empty title of bishops, simply sit idly by—sad objects, memorials now to move the Church of God to tears, after the likeness of the pillar of salt into which Lot’s wife was turned, as a memorial of the burning of Sodom.

—Ishu‘-Yab III, *Letter* 18 : 3 (Latin pp. 190-191).

¹ The Arab invasion of Oman and the Persian Empire came from the south.

The Rebellion of Fars against the Patriarchal Authority

A Past History of Simony and Schism

In his first letter to Shim'un, written in reply to a formal but hollow letter of greeting, Ishu'-Yab speaks of the disastrous state of affairs in Oman and Kerman, which he attributes to the lack of valid ordination, due to the schism of Fars in the time of his predecessors. The basic reason for the schism was simony—the Metropolitan of Fars and his bishops were making money out of selling ordinations.

432 If anyone were to wish to take this thing [the power of ordination] illegally by false means, he would seize the name indeed, but the power would by no means be transmitted with it . . .

Remember this also, holy¹ Brother, that as you closed the door of episcopal ordination in the face of the many peoples of India, and impeded the gift of God for the sake of perishable gains which feed bodily desire, so also did our predecessors close in the face of your spiritual need the door of the gift of God²—and how hopeless the situation is among you, perhaps you might be able to know! But when the gift of God has flowed and flows through legitimate transmission in the canonical ways, lo! the world is full of bishops, priests, and faithful, as numerous as the stars of heaven, and day by day increasing. As far as your province is concerned, since your revolt against ecclesiastical canons, the priestly succession has been broken for the people of India.³ In darkness, far from the light of the Gospel, which is through the true episcopate, dwells not only India, which extends from the borders of the Persian Empire to the place they call Qalah,⁴ which is a distance of 1200 parasangs [4000 miles], but also even your own region of Fars.⁵

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 14: 4 and 8 (Latin, pp. 181, 182).

¹ Literally 'God-loving', an honorific term.

² What actually had happened is not very clear. It was customary in the Church of the East for newly appointed Metropolitans and Bishops to go to Ctesiphon to be 'perfected' by the Patriarch there (See Canon 20 of the Synod of Seleucia, in 394). Possibly this 'perfecting' had been refused because of simony, and the Province of Fars had carried on without it.

³ It seems perfectly clear from this statement that the Church of India was still part of the Province of Fars, and that a separate Metropolitan of India had not yet been appointed. See also 16, notes 2 and 22.

⁴ Possibly Galle (Ceylon). The distance may be an exaggeration, but the countries covered by it are present-day West Pakistan, India and Ceylon.

⁵ Fars is here used geographically, not ecclesiastically, and means a province of Persia lying to the north of the Persian Gulf.

A Present Reaction of Open Defiance

It is clear from the later letters that Ishu'-Yab had invited not only Shim'un, but the Bishops of Fars and Qatar, to come to Ctesiphon, make their submission to him, and receive canonical ordination. Their reaction was to assert their independence of the Patriarch openly in writing. In Qatar the bishops also tried to get support for their actions from the Muslim rulers.

- 433 When I saw how your¹ faith is now weak, from the sluggishness or rather apostasy which has come among you, I summoned you to come to me—that is, to the Church of God—in order that you might be given the spiritual gift by which you might be strengthened to rise against the fire of apostasy which blazes in your province . . .

But like men who are tormented by that sickness of faith which unlawful ordinations produce, and especially because you look on the question of ecclesiastical subordination from a worldly point of view, suddenly you yourselves have declared war² and taken up arms against the Church of God. From your accustomed wrong-headedness ingrained in you, you believe that whoever places himself under the Head of the Church does so, not to receive spiritual grace, but to pay material tribute ! And this you yourselves have been accustomed impiously to exact from one another, and from the remotest peoples of India. Enslaved by this your perverse opinion, which is foreign to priests and Christians, you turned aside long ago from the lawful Head of the Church of God, and you yourselves were deprived of priestly power, which was being canonically transmitted to you by the lawful imposition of hands from the fount of the Church of God itself, and the strength of your faith weakened—as the tragedy of this time has shown.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 16:3 and 4 (Latin, p. 186).

¹ In this letter 'you' is always plural, referring to the bishops, clergy and people of the Province of Fars.

² This evidently refers to the written statement. See 434.

Writing to the people of Qatar, Ishu'-Yab speaks more specifically about the signed declaration of independence.

- 434 I invited the bishops of Fars to the Synod of the Church of God to receive [canonical orders]. In the same way I invited your bishops with great charity and promise of

higher honours. But they . . . have abandoned the way of life, which leads to the Church of God, and going forward to [support] one who was opposing the ecclesiastical laws, to pull Fars away into the way of death, they have abjured the Christian religion¹ by a blasphemous writing and impious autograph, aiming by this pact to desert the fellowship of the Church of God for ever, . . . as if the denial of the Faith was not just confined to them, as in the case of the people of Mazon, but also [included] their descendants !

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter 18:5* (Latin, pp. 191-192).

¹ i.e. the Church of the East. Compare Cyprian in 316.

There are two references to the appeal to the Muslim rulers by the Bishops of Qatar.

- 435 You . . . refused to come near to the Church of God, and were hustled by an inconsidered impetus to the leader of your rebellion [Shim'un], and by reason of an impoverished mind you stupidly wrote and set your seals to your revolt against God. Yes, and you took the statement of your rebellion to the tribunal of the secular Princes, and you did all this, in order to cut yourselves off completely from the hope of Church life.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter 17:2* (Latin, p. 189).

- 436 Since your so-called bishops would not have been satisfied by your hostile impiety to the Church of God, they have aimed to show off their rebellion to the earthly Rulers, and even to the Great Prince [the Caliph], the Chief of the Princes of this time. This is to behave contrary to the government of the Church of God, and they have in reality been despised by the Princes, just as their rebellion ought to have been.¹

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter 18:7* (Latin, p. 192).

¹ Probably Ishu'-Yab's own influence with the Muslim authorities was used in this case. See Mari's account in 446.

Ishu'-Yab's Doctrine of Apostolic Succession

Ishu'-Yab states and reiterates tirelessly his view of the signs of a living Church, and of their complete dependence on a valid Church order.

The Power of the Spirit, and its Source

- 437 It has been written in the Gospel that the Lord said concerning those who were going to hear His word : ' I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly ' [John 10 : 10]. Indeed he calls the recognition of the truth ' life ', as He himself explained when He said : ' And this is life eternal, that they should know thee the one God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent ' [John 17 : 3]. By ' more abundantly ' he alludes to the grace of the Spirit which those were to receive who would take upon themselves Baptism in His name, and by a gift from above would be made worthy of His honour in this Church of His which is on earth, and in the other which is in heaven.

—Ishu'-Yab, *Letter 17 : 1* (Latin, p. 188).

- 438 The perfect life of the Christians is proved by two indications : by a holy life, and by Divine miracles which they can perform ; and above all by this, that they match a faithful life with a faithful death. They wondrously achieve these three things, because they first received the power of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Baptism. But the Spirit Himself is rightly and justly given by the priestly power of the Holy Church of God, conferred by the laying-on of hands and the Apostolic succession, which is imparted canonically in the Holy Church of Christ our Lord.

—Ishu'-Yab, *Letter 21 : 2* (Latin, p. 201).

Apostolic Succession and Canonical Transmission of Power

- 439 Just as the Christians living among you cannot be Christians without priests, and your priests cannot be priests without bishops, so your bishops cannot be bishops without metropolitans, and so again metropolitans cannot be metropolitans without the Patriarch ; and the Patriarch himself, who is the Father of Princes or the Head of the Fathers, if he has not been promoted from the episcopate to the Patriarchate, there are certain metropolitans designated by canon law who lay hands on him, and if this is not performed, his office is without power. Because the people of Fars and Qatar are ignorant of these facts, on account of their ignorance of the laws of God, they separate themselves from the Church of God, are deprived of the grace of God, and are spiritually impoverished.

—Ishu'-Yab, *Letter 21 : 6* (Latin, p. 203).

- 440 The source of Christianity is the priestly power ; but the priestly power is transmitted by the canonical laying-on of hands. But if the laying-on of hands is done illegally, the priestly power never flows with it by the transmission from higher to lower, as [it has flowed] from Heaven upon the Apostles, and from the Apostles to their successors, until the end of the world.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter 14 : 4* (Latin, p. 180-181).

Where there is Apostolic Succession, Asceticism Flourishes

After speaking of the lamentable state of Fars, Oman, Kerman and India, Ishu'-Yab draws a picture of conditions in the Province of Arbil and Hazzah, where he had been Metropolitan, and where there was regular Church Order. It is clear that he has an ascetic ideal very different from the point of view of the Patriarch Shila (see 428).

- 441 In these humble provinces of ours the number of the saints of our Lord is in fact not much less than the number of those who submit to the yoke of matrimony . . . Among their number are those who by the grace of God are called to the ministry of the Church—bishops, metropolitans, Patriarchs and other leaders lower in rank. Because of this state of affairs, the dignity of Christianity is increased daily by the grace of God ; faith increases, the order of bishops flourishes, and the glory of God is exalted.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter 14 : 5* (Latin, p. 181).

Apostolic Succession is Compatible with a measure of Local Autonomy

See the important quotation from Letter 21 (20), which makes it clear that once distant Metropolitans and bishops had been 'perfected' by the Patriarch, they could more or less be left to themselves.

Steps taken by Ishu'-Yab to end the Schism

The letters, of course, tell an unfinished story. The first steps—the summoning of Shim'un and his bishops to Ctesiphon to receive canonical orders—and the reaction against them, have already been described.

Appeal to a Learned Doctor

- 442 See to it that you yourself become an example of virtue, not only to the people and the priests, but also to the very bishops in these parts, as it is right you should be.

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 15 : 2 (Latin, p. 185).

For Ishu'-Yab's attitude to Christian Teachers and Schools, see also 429.

Suspended Sentence of Deposition

This is mentioned in the case of the Bishops of Qatar, but it may have been general.

- 443 Therefore the Church of God, that is this Holy Synod, which has been assembled at this time in the City of the See of the Catholicos [Patriarch], has done for you what you have already done for yourselves, hurling you down from honour and office, which you only held in name.

For it is right to defrock those who are bishops only in name, so that people may not be deceived.

Nevertheless I, who have frequently experienced God's power to raise the dead to life, have decided to desist meanwhile from taking action on the sentence against you [till after you have replied to this letter].

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 17 : 2 and 3 (Latin, p. 189).

Delegations of Bishops, and their Reception

- 444 It has seemed right to me to send on commission these two priests of God, Mar Theodore Bishop of Hormizd-ardashir [Ahwaz], and George Bishop of Shuster [in the hope that they may bring you of Fars back to life from the dead].

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 16 : 6 (Latin, p. 187).

Those sent were not received favourably, and Ishu'-Yab tried again.

- 445 I sent again a commission of two bishops of Hazzah to the inhabitants of Fars, and in the same way Bishops of Maishan to you, with my letters and those of the whole Synod . . .

And those indeed, who had been sent to Fars, have themselves come back from there alone.¹ Those who were destined for you [in Qatar] substituted others. Now indeed, with what disgrace and dishonour and blasphemy the priests of God, who had been sent by the Church of God to men who appeared to be Christians, have come back from Fars and the people of Qatar, you can learn better than we, if you take the trouble to find out !

—Ishu'-Yab III, *Letter* 18 : 6 (Latin, p. 192).

¹ Either means 'unaccompanied' or 'empty-handed'.

Further Appeals

Ishu'-Yab wrote to the people, and asked them to appoint new bishops and priests, and send them to him for ordination. He appealed to the monks of Qatar to come for ordination, which they did. He asked for their help in Qatar, and when they were persecuted he wrote to encourage them not to compromise. The account of the letters ends at this point.

Supplementary Information from Other Sources

Mari's Account

In the *Book of the Tower* (c. 1140), Mari ibn Suleman gives a brief account of the history of Ishu'-Yab III. His work is based on earlier sources, and his main facts are probably reliable.

- 446 Ishu'-Yab of Hazzah, designated Metropolitan of Hazzah and Mosul¹ by the votes of the electors, was appointed Patriarch of the Royal Cities according to the rule. He was an exceedingly notable man, to whom the Rulers of the Districts greatly deferred, to such an extent that one of them gave him a Diploma, in which a warning was given that no one was to make trouble for him in respect of his own monasteries, or See, or revenue, or household immunities—with only a small charge exacted for these things. They asked him each week what he needed ; or he asked for whatever could be useful for the affairs of the Christians.

¹ The name Mosul is an anachronism. It should be Arbil at this time. See 16, note 1.

Moreover, Ishu'-Yab was the first to take the initiative and go on a journey to put right the affairs of Shim'un, Metropolitan of Fars, and bring him under his authority ; indeed the Metropolitans of Fars who had gone before had never subjected themselves to the authority of the Patriarch of the East.

—Mari ibn Suleman, *Book of the Tower*, p. 78a (Latin in Gismondi, *M.A.S.*, Mari p. 55. Y.).

Creation of New Metropolitans for Qatar and India

It seems likely that on his visit to Shim'un, Ishu'-Yab not only reduced him to submission, possibly with Muslim help, but appointed separate metropolitans for Qatar and India, thus reducing the size of Shim'un's Province of Fars. For a discussion of the available evidence, see 16-22.

Visit of George I to Qatar in 676

See 21, and especially footnote 1.

Trouble of Timothy I (779-823) with the Clergy of Fars

Bar-Hebraeus (Abu'l-Faraj) the great Jacobite scholar and writer, who lived from 1226 to 1286, speaks of trouble between the Patriarch Timothy I and the clergy of Fars. Mingana gives the date as c. 795.

447 It is said that down to the time of this Timothy, the bishops of the Province of Fars were wearing white garments like secular priests, were eating meat, and marrying,¹ and were not under the jurisdiction of the Catholicos of Seleucia.² They used to say : ' We have been evangelised by the Apostle Thomas, and we have no share with the See of Mari.'³ Timothy, however, united them and joined them to him. He ordained for them as Metropolitan a man named Shim'un, and he ordered them not to eat meat, nor marry, and to wear white garments made only of wool. He further permitted

¹ By this time Bishops in the East had to be celibate, though priests could marry.

² An anachronism. By this time the capital was in Baghdad.

³ The traditional disciple of Addai (see 11) and founder of the Church of the East. Mingana considers him to be unhistorical.

him to confirm the bishops whom he would ordain, without coming for such confirmation to the Catholicos.

—Bar-Hebraeus, *Ecclesiastical Chronicle* 3: 169-171 (Mingana, *B. J. R. L.* 10, p. 467).

The above account, written more than 400 years after the events it describes, looks suspiciously like a muddled account of what happened in the time of Ishu'-Yab III.

Further Light on the Character of Ishu'-Yab III

See the amusing story of the theft of relics from Antioch (170), and the account of Ishu'-Yab's attempt to build a school at Bait-Abe (429).

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Introductory Note

The source from which each passage in this book has been taken is noted briefly below the passage itself. First of all the writer's name is given, where known; then the brief title of his work in English, with chapter and verse reference where possible; then (in brackets) the source of the translation. In view of the variety of the sources, absolute consistency has not been possible, but the following general rules have been observed:

1. Normally the source of the translation is indicated by an initial or initials, or a surname. Initials in ordinary capitals are those of writers, those in *italics* refer to books.
2. Where the translation is found in a book with a different title, this is noted.
3. Where I myself have translated from an original language, the location of the original source is indicated more fully.
4. Where I have translated from a translation, the language (Latin or French) of the translation is named, and then an exact reference to where the translation can be found.
5. A star * placed after the name of a translator or book from which a translation has been taken, indicates that I have altered the translation. Normally the alteration is a minor one, like changing 'Logos' to 'Word', and making the English more modern and clear. Minor alterations of punctuation and capitalisation are not starred. Where a significant alteration has been made, it is indicated in a footnote.
6. Where no source of translation is given, but only a star * within brackets, I have taken the translation from more than one source, and recast it freely. It is not, however, an original translation.
7. In J. Stevenson's *A New Eusebius* passages are found where the translation has been revised by Stevenson. This is indicated here by giving first the original source of the translation, and then the reviser's initial, e.g. 'A.-N.C.L.—S.'
8. For the references in **430-445** see the introductory note which precedes them.

With regard to the passages themselves, the following should be noted:

(a) Expressions enclosed within square brackets [] do not belong to the source quoted. They are either summaries of omitted words, words added to explain the sense, or Bible references,

(b) Where a longer summary of an omitted passage is given, it is put in smaller type. Where no summary is necessary, the omission is shown by '...'

(c) I have tried to be consistent in using capitals. In references to the Deity, I have used 'He, His, Him' but 'who, whose, whom'.

This Bibliography is in three parts:

Part 1 lists original sources in Syriac, Arabic, Chinese, Greek and Latin; and sources of Latin and French translations of Syriac and Arabic. Well-known Patristic sources are not included.

Part 2 lists books from which English translations have been taken.

Part 3 lists a few books or articles referred to in the Preface and notes.

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NOTES ON SOURCES

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'Abd-ishu' bar Berikha, d. 1318. Bishop of Shigar c. 1284, and later Metropolitan of Barda'a (Armenia). Nestorian writer and collector of canon law.

Canons 17.

Abraham the Great of Kashkar, c. 502-596. Hermit at Mt. Izla near Nisibin, where he had a large number of ascetic followers. His canons were normative for monastic practice in the Church of the East.

Canons 427.

Abu'l Faraj (Bar-Hebraeus), 1226-1286. Bishop of Antioch, and Jacobite Patriarch from 1264. He travelled much, and visited libraries. In his writings he condensed or reproduced information from earlier sources.

Ecclesiastical Chronicle 447.

Acts of the Holy Martyrs of the East, and Acts of the Martyrs and Saints. Quotations in this book from these two collections date from the early Fifth Century, and are by eyewitnesses of the later persecutions under Shapur I.

113, 180, 388, 400.

Acts of Thomas, before 250. Romance, probably of Gnostic origin, available in many Syriac and Greek MSS. The original was in Syriac, and probably written in Edessa.

23.

Acts of Justin and His Companions. Account of the martyrdom of Justin Martyr and others in c. 165, based on Roman official records.

47.

Adamnan, c. 624-704. Abbot of Iona 679-704. His *Life of Columba* contains much fabulous material, but some of it, based on eyewitness accounts, is of great historical value.

Life of St. Columba 43, 182.

See also (166).

Afrahat (Aphraates), early Fourth Century. Persian monk, probably a Bishop and head of a monastery near Mosul. Called 'the Persian Sage'. His *Demonstrations* were written in 337, 344 and 345. He was probably a martyr in the persecution under Shapur II.

Demonstrations 74, 231, 246, 304, 384, 386, 387, 391, 419, 425.

Ambrose, c. 339-397. Governor of Milan, who was baptised and became Bishop there in 374. Champion of orthodox Christianity against Arianism and Paganism.

Epistles 370.

Sermon against Auxentius 147.

On Fleeing from the World (De Fuga Saeclae) 331.

On Luke 332.

See also 62, 146.

'Amr ibn Matta, fl. 1350. Nestorian who wrote in Arabic. See the introductory note to 18.

History of the Nestorian Patriarchs 18.

Anonymous, Sixth Century. Unknown writer who fl. 555. See the introductory note to 39.

39, 398.

Apollinaris, c. 310-390. Bishop of Laodicea from c. 360. His teaching about the incarnation was condemned as heresy in 381; he himself seceded from the Church in 375.

264-266.

See also (261), 267.

Apostolic Constitutions, late Fourth Century. Collection of Church Law, including canons and liturgical material, probably Syrian in origin.

178.

Aristeides, Second Century. Apologist, of Athens. His *Apology* is said by Eusebius to have been written about 124, but may be later, about 150-160.

Apology 181.

Arius, d. 335. Presbyter of Alexandria, condemned as a heretic by the Council of Nicaea in 325.

Quoted by Theodoret 259.

See also 36, (94), 114, (246), 260, 365-368.

Athanasius, c. 300-373. Champion of Trinitarian orthodoxy at the Council of Nicaea 325. Bishop of Alexandria from 328. Five times exiled.

Against Arius 325, 328.

Festal Epistles 214.

Apology to Emperor Constantius 366. *History of Arianism* 367.

On the Incarnation 324, 326, 327. *On the Nicene Decrees* 329.

See also 27, 35, (208).

Athenagoras, fl. 177. Second Century Christian apologist, possibly resident in Athens. His *Plea for the Christians* was written about 177.

A Plea for the Christians 257.

Augustine, 354-430. Son of a Pagan father and Christian mother, he was first a Manichaean, then a Platonist, and was converted to Christianity in 386. He became Bishop of Hippo in North Africa. For details of his conversion see 83-86. He was the greatest theologian of the Early Church. His *Confessions* is the autobiography of his early years.

Against Cresconius 194.

Confessions 62, 67, 83-86, 146, 255.

The City of God 318, 372, 413.

The Gift of Perseverance 339.

Letters 337.

Manual on Faith, Hope and Love (Enchiridion) 256, 339.

On Baptism 123.

On the Cross of Christ 334.

On the Acts of Pelagius 335.

On psalms 317.

On Irresistible Grace (*De Cor-
reptione et Gratia*) 338.

The Spirit and the Letter 336.

See also (248) (250), (252), (261)

Avella, Collection of (Coll. Avellana). A collection of various documents in Latin concerning the history of the Church at Rome from 367 to 553.

420.

Balyzeh Papyrus, Der. Fragments of Greek papyri found at Der Balyzeh (Egypt) in 1907. Probably 6th Century, but the Creed quoted is much older.

240.

Bar-Hebraeus—See Abu'l Faraj.

Bardaisan, 154-222. Converted at Edessa in 179; probably lived there most of his life. The *Dialogue on Fate* (wrongly called *The*

Book of the Laws of the Countries) written under the name of his disciple Philip, is probably by Bardaisan himself, and written during the reign of Abgar VIII (179-214). Mingana dates it 196. Bardaisan may have written the *Hymn of the Soul*.

Dialogue on Fate 8, 14, 115.

Basil the Great, c. 330-379. Greek theologian and Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Champion of Nicene orthodoxy, and leader of Greek monasticism.

Letters 82, 247, 426.

On the Holy Spirit 305.

See also 81, (304), (424).

Basilikos, Byzantine Emperor 475-477.

Quoted by Evagrius 295.

Bede, The Venerable, c. 672-735. English monk and scholar. His *History of the English Church and People* (often called *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*) tells us almost all we know about the Christian Church in Britain before his time. He is a careful historian, and quotes much earlier source-material.

History of the English Church and People 44, 54, 60, 75, 93, 96, 106, 166, 191, 340.

See also 183.

Book of Jesus the Messiah, The (Hsü t'ing Mi-shih so ching), 7th Cent. Chinese MS, dated possibly 638. Bought in 1922 by a Japanese scholar. It is first-hand evidence of the teaching of A-lo-pen and his followers.

91, 330

Coelestius, fl. 405-431. Irish Pelagian monk who tried to spread this teaching in Rome, Carthage and Ephesus.

Quoted by Augustine 335.

Celsus, 2nd Cent. Pagan philosopher. His *True Discourse* (c. 178) is the oldest surviving literary attack on Christianity. Perhaps ninety per cent of it is quoted in Origen's reply.

Quoted by Origen 1, 109, 112.

Christian Monument at Ch'ang-An (sometimes called the **Nestorian Monument**). Inscription on stone discovered in 1625 at Ch'ang-An in N.W. China. Contains an account of the arrival of Christianity in Ch'ang-An in 635, the history of the Church there till about 780, and a summary of Christian doctrine. Its date is usually given as 781, but it may be 779.

33, 217, 303.

Chronicle of Sa'ard (Chronique de Seert) 9th or 13th Cent. A history of the Patriarchs of the Church of the East found in the 19th Cent. at Sa'ard in N.W. Mesopotamia. It covers the period up to about 640. Its dating from internal evidence is either after 828 or after 1228. It uses earlier sources.

26, 29, 87, 401, 402, 404, 406.

Chrysostom, John—See John Chrysostom.

Clement of Rome, fl. 96. Probably Bishop of Rome. Of the writings attributed to him, only *I Clement*, a letter to the Church at Corinth written about 96, is genuine. He is one of the Apostolic Fathers.

I Clement 195.

See also 213, (344).

Clement of Alexandria, c. 150-c. 215. Convert from Paganism, and leader of the Catechetical School at Alexandria till 202, when he went into exile.

Miscellanies (Stromateis) 72.

See also (34).

Clementine Homilies, 2nd Century. A kind of historical novel, based on contemporary preaching conditions. Not by Clement of Rome.

51.

Codex Alexandrinus, early 5th Cent. MS. of the Greek Bible, including also I and II Clement, and a version of the *Gloria in Excelsis*.

Gloria in Excelsis 148.

Confession of 612. Included in the *Records of Eastern Synods* (which see).

Constantine the Great, 274-337. Roman Emperor. After his victory in 312, he favoured Christianity, and was baptised on his deathbed. Built a second capital city at Constantinople.

Quoted 360-364.

See also (121), (127), 165, 166, (194), 383, 385, 386.

Constantius, Roman Emperor from 337 to 361. He tried to establish Arianism as the religion of the Empire both by force and diplomacy.

Quoted 366.

See also (36), (38), (260), 365, 367, 388, 389.

Cosmas the India-Sailor (Indicopleustes), 6th Cent. See introduction to 30. His *Christian Topography* was written about 547.

Christian Topography 5, 30, 215.

See also (87).

Cornelius, Bishop of Rome from 251-253.

Quoted by Eusebius 41.

Council of Aqaq, 486. Included in the *Records of Eastern Synods* (which see).

Council of Chalcedon, 451. The fourth Ecumenical Council.
Acts 284. *Canons* 206.

Council of Constantinople, 381. The second Ecumenical Council.
Canons 205. *Session* 7 282.

Council of Gangra, c. 345. Regional council held at Gangra in Paphlagonia. It opposed asceticism.

Canons 153.

Council of Nicaea, 325. The first Ecumenical Council.

Canons 204.

Cuthbert of Jarrow, fl. 735. An English monk who witnessed the death of the Venerable Bede, and wrote about it to his friend Cuthwin in 735.

Letter to Cuthwin 183.

Cyril of Alexandria, d. 444. Patriarch of Alexandria from 412. Opponent of Nestorius, whom he got deposed at the Council of Ephesus in 431.

Epistles 281.

See also (264), (277), (281), (301).

Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop of Jerusalem 350-386. Used the fashion of pilgrimage to Jerusalem as an opportunity of giving regular instruction, and baptising converts at Easter. His *Catecheses* were lectures delivered first in 348.

Catecheses 72.

See also (165), (244).

Cyprian, c. 200-258. Wealthy lawyer of Carthage, converted c. 246, and Bishop of Carthage from 248. He went into exile in the Decian persecution, but died as a martyr in 258.

Epistles 139, 353.

To Donatus 80.

On Unity 203, 353.

See also (151), 415.

Damasus, 304-384. Bishop of Rome from 366, but there was a struggle for succession against Ursinus till 381. He opposed Apollinarianism, and commissioned Jerome to write the Vulgate.

Epistles 267.

See also 219, 420-421.

Diodore of Tarsus, fl. 378-394. Early theologian of the Antiochene school, who anticipated Nestorius in some ways.

Quoted by Severus of Antioch 279.

See also 29, 87.

Dionysius Barsalibi, d. 1171. Jacobite scholar and theologian. Bishop of Mar'ash from 1145, and later transferred to Amid. Wrote Commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and works against various heresies.

Against the Armenians 124.

Dionysius of Alexandria, died c. 264. Head of the Catechetical School from about 233, and Bishop from 247.

Quoted by Eusebius 341, 355.

Dionysius of Corinth, fl. 165. Bishop of Corinth.

Quoted by Eusebius 176.

Didache, or Teaching of the Twelve Apostles. Short manual on morals and Church practice, possibly used in preparing converts for baptism. May be from Syria or Egypt. The author is unknown. Date about 100.

50, 73, 116, 130, 155, 171, 196.

Didascalia of the Apostles, before 250. Syriac document, probably a translation of a now lost Greek original. Written by a physician living in Syria.

174.

Doctrine of the Apostles, about 250. Syriac document, written in Edessa. It gives an important picture of Church practice in Edessa and the East at that time.

24, 126, 141, 145, 158, 161, 164, 201, 212.

Edessene Chronicle. See introduction to 9.

9.

Egeria, Pilgrimage of. (*Egeria* is sometimes known as *Etheria*, and was formerly wrongly identified with *Sylvia*). Spanish lady

who visited the Holy Land, etc., from 414 to 416, and wrote a description of the places she visited.

166.

Elder, The (probably the Apostle John).

Quoted by Papias in Eusebius 209.

Ephraim the Syrian, c. 306-373. Born in Nisibin, and spent most of his life in Edessa. Poet and preacher in Syriac, who wrote his *Nisibene Hymns* after about 363.

Nisibene Hymns 168.

Epiphanius, c. 315-403. Native of Palestine and Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus from 367. Violent defender of orthodoxy. His work against heresies contains many extracts from original sources.

At Anchor (Ancoratus) 244. *Heresies* 245, 250, 309-313.

Epistle of the Apostles c. 150-180. Apocryphal work, originally in Greek, but now available only in Ethiopic translation.

239.

Epistle to Diognetus, 2nd or 3rd Cent. Anonymous apology for Christianity written to a Diognetus who has not been identified.

97, 142.

Eusebius Pamphilus, c. 260-c. 340. Bishop of Caesarea, and friend of Constantine the Great, he has been called the Father of Church History. His *Ecclesiastical History* (323) quotes dozens of older sources which would otherwise be lost. He took a prominent part in the Council of Nicaea.

Ecclesiastical History 10, 34, 41, 61, 157, 160, 176, 199, 209, 210, 213, 220, 221, 341-343, 345, 351, 354, 355, 357, 361, 362, 418.

Orations 218.

Life of Constantine 364, 385.

See also 27, (242).

Eustace the Cobbler, The Passion of. Anonymous, late 6th Cent. Detailed almost contemporary account of the martyrdom of Eustace of Georgia, who was put to death by the Governor under Khusrau I in 544 or 545.

114.

Evagrius, b. 536. His *Ecclesiastical History* is a continuation of that of Eusebius, and covers the period 431-594.

Ecclesiastical History, 295, 296.

Galerius, d. 311. Roman Emperor, Caesar of the East from 293, and Emperor from 305. Persuaded Diocletian to persecute the Christians 303.

Quoted by Lactantius 359.

See also 356.

Gelasius of Cyzicus about 475 published a collection of Acts of the Council of Nicaea from different sources. Some of his sources are reliable, but it is difficult to estimate the value of his reports on attendances and signatures.

Ecclesiastical History, 27.

Gelasius, Pope. Bishop of Rome from 492 to 496.

Epistles 373.

Gloria in Excelsis. A Christian Hymn in many forms.

Greek—See **Codex Alexandrinus**.

Syriac—as used in the Church of the East in the 19th Century, 149.

Chinese—See **Hymn of the Saved to the Trinity**.

Gregory of Nazianzus, 329-389. Friend of Basil the Great, and one of the three 'Cappadocian Fathers', staunch in their defence of one the Nicene Faith.

Orations 422.

Gregory of Nyssa, c. 330-395. Brother of Basil the Great, and one of the three 'Cappadocian Fathers'.

Life of St. Macrina 8.

Life of Gregory the Wonder-Worker (Gregory Thaumaturgos) 58.

See also (164).

Gregory the Wonder-Worker (Thaumaturgos), c. 213-c.270. Native of Pontus, who was converted in 234 through Origen at Caesarea. He returned to Pontus and was very successful as a missionary, converting almost the whole country.

Address to Origen 79.

See also 58.

Gregory the Great, Pope from 590 to 604. Possibly the greatest of the Popes. He improved Church music, formulated the doctrine of Purgatory, and sent missionaries to England.

Quoted by Bede 45, 75, 191.

See also 340.

Gouvea, Antonio de, fl. 1600. Portuguese monk and explorer,

who spent some years before 1600 in India, and did his best to investigate the history and practices of the Malabar Church.

Journal (Jornada) 409.

Oriental History 25.

Guide-Book to the Red Sea (The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea). Guidebook for traders, by a trader, written in Greek about 60, giving first-hand information about ports in the Red and Arabian Seas as far as South India, and their trade in imports and exports with the Roman Empire.

4.

Habil 'the Doctor'. Earlier writer quoted by Mashiha-Zakha. He seems thoroughly familiar with the customs and Kings of the Parthian period, and as his accounts deal only with the first half of the Second Century, he may have been late Second Century.

Quoted by Mashiha-Zakha **II**, 376, 377.

Hermas, who lived in Rome about 100, wrote *the Shepherd*, an elaborate series of allegories, answering various questions about the Christian life.

The Shepherd 154.

See also **187**, **211**, **213**.

Himyarites, The Book of the. See the introduction to **408**.

299, **408**.

Hippolytus, c. 160-235. Presbyter and later schismatic bishop of Rome. Versatile writer and energetic controversialist. Died in exile in Sardinia.

Apostolic Tradition **71**, **119**, **122**, **137**.

Refutation of All Heresies **314**.

Hosius, c. 257-357. Bishop of Cordova in Spain from 296. Ecclesiastical Adviser to the Emperor Constantine from 313 to 325, he may have presided at the Council of Nicaea.

Quoted by Athanasius **367**.

See also **27**.

Hymn of the Soul, The. Christian allegorical poem in Syriac written c. 200, possibly by Bardaisan, and later incorporated in the *Acts of Thomas*.

13.

Hymn of the Saved to the Trinity. MS found at Tun-Huang in China in 1908, probably c. 800, written at or near Ch'ang-An. Contains first the Chinese *Gloria in Excelsis*, then a list of saints and sacred

books. It was possibly written by one Adam, called Ching-Ching, and was sealed in a cave from 1036 to 1908.

150.

Ibn-at-Tayyib. Nestorian canonist. See introduction to 16.
Canons 16.

Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch who wrote 7 letters on his way to martyrdom in Rome about 115. He was a strong opponent of Docetism and champion of church order.

Ephesians 132.

Smyrnaeans 131, 197.

Philadelphians 208.

Trallians 262.

Irenaeus, c. 130-c. 200. Greek from Asia Minor who settled in Gaul as a missionary and became Bishop of Lyons in 178. He is 'the first great Catholic theologian'. His main book is *Against Heresies*, written c. 190.

Against Heresies 40, 53, 55, 135, 235, 251, 252, 321-323.

Quoted by Eusebius 157, 210.

Ishu'-Dad of Merv, 9th Cent. Native of Merv. Bishop of Haditha in Assyria. Nominated Patriarch of the East in 852, but not appointed.

Commentary on Romans 28.

Ishu'-Yab III. Patriarch of the East 650-660. Native of Huzzah and monk of Bait Abe, he wrote three series of letters, as a monk, as Metropolitan of Arbil and Huzzah, and as Patriarch. See further in the introduction to 430-445.

Letters 20, 430-445.

See also (16), (21), 170, 429.

Jerome (Hieronymus), c. 340-420. An outstanding Christian scholar, a native of Rome, who spent 30 years as head of a monastery in Bethlehem. His most famous work is the Vulgate Latin translation of the Bible.

Apology against Rufinus 175.

Epistles 371. *On Titus* 198.

Preface to the Four Gospels 219.

Preface to the Rule of St. Pachomius 424.

For Jerome see also (164).

John Chrysostom (John of the Golden Mouth), c. 347-407. Native of Antioch, and eloquent preacher, he became Patriarch of Constantinople, but was banished by the Empress Eudoxia, and died in exile. He was a great Bible expositor.

On Galatians 230, 232-234.

On Isaiah 231.

Letter to a Young Widow 66.

See also (7), (174), (214), (230), (268).

Josephus, c. 37-100. Jewish historian. He fought against the Romans in the Jewish War, and was captured in 67, and released in 69. His great works are his *Jewish War* (77-8) and his *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. 94).

Antiquities of the Jews 342. Quoted exactly by Eusebius; I have taken the translation from a modern edition of Eusebius.

Julian the Apostate, 332-363. Nephew of Constantine the Great, he renounced Christianity and in his short reign from 361 to 363 tried to restore paganism in the Roman Empire. He died in war with Shapur II.

Epistles 179, 365.

See also (65).

Justin Martyr, c. 100-165. Christian Apologist, born at Nablus in Palestine. He was a philosopher before he became a Christian, and continued to wear the philosopher's gown afterwards. His chief works are his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew* (about 140), and his two *Apologies*, about 155 and 161. He died a martyr's death in Rome.

I Apology 6, 68, 99, 103, 117, 133, 134, 144, 348.

II Apology 56, 77, 99, 416.

Dialogue with Trypho the Jew 46, 56, 76, 95, 104, 108, 316, 320.

See also 47, (78).

Junilius, fl. mid 6th Cent. Quaestor of the Sacred Palace under the Emperor Justinian. He was a layman. His *Letter to Bishop Primasius* describes the teaching given to one Paul who had been a student at Nisibin about 551.

Letter to Bishop Primasius 216.

Justinian. Byzantine Emperor from 527 to 565. Strongest and most successful of the Byzantine Emperors. His generals reconquered most of Italy, North Africa and Spain from the Goths and Vandals. He built St. Sophia Church in Constantinople. He codified the Roman Laws up to his time in his famous *Code of Civil Law*; included in this are the *Code of Theodosius*, and the *Novels*, or New Laws.

Code of Civil Law (*Corpus Iuris Civilis*) 363. *Novels* 374-375.

Edicts 301.

See also 10, 39, 87, (373).

Lactantius, c. 240-320 was converted to Christianity about 300. He wrote *On the Anger of God*, dealing with God's punishment of human crime, and *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, describing the persecution under Diocletian, of which he was an eyewitness.

On the Anger of God 69

On the Deaths of the Persecutors
356, 359, 360.

Leo the Great, 360-461. Pope from 440 to 461. Important for his intervention on behalf of the people when Rome was captured by the Huns, for his *Tome*, which influenced the decision of the Council of Chalcedon, and for his high views of the supremacy of the Papacy.

Letters 207, 283.

Libanius, 314-c. 395. Pagan rhetorician, friend of Julian the Apostate, teacher of John Chrysostom. He belonged to Antioch, and lived there most of his life.

Letters 65.

Mani, fl. 242-272. See introduction to 253.

Shahbuhrgan 253.

See also 33, (254), 319.

Manichee Hymn, translated from a collection of Middle Iranian Manichaean Texts.

254.

Mar Aba, Life of. Syriac account written possibly within a century of Mar Aba's death (before 650). It is certainly much earlier than the *Chronique de Seert*.

31, 399, 403, 405.

Mar Aba, Judicial Acts of. Included in *Records of Eastern Synods* (which see).

Marcellinus, Ammianus, c. 330-after 390. Last pagan historian of the ancient world, part of whose history, covering the period 353-378, is extant today. He was a friendly critic of the Christians.

Current Events, 421.

Mari ibn Suleman, 12th Century. Nestorian historian, whose *Book of the Tower* (c. 1140) gives an account of the lives of the Patriarchs of the East. It depends largely on earlier sources.

The Book of the Tower (Liber Turris), 446.

Mashiha-Zakha, 6th Century. A Christian of Arbil who wrote between 550 and 569 an account of the Bishops of Arbil covering the period from 99 to 540. He uses at least one earlier source, probably 2nd Century (see *Habil*), and his *Chronicle of Arbil* is probably the only reliable source available today for the history of Christianity under the Parthians. The *Chronicle of Sa'ard*, and the histories of Mari and 'Amr-Saliba are not reliable for the Parthian period.

Chronicle of Arbil 11, 12, 15, 59, 273, 376-383, 428.

Maximilla, 2nd Century. Montanist prophetess. Quoted by Epiphanius 311, 312.

Minucius Felix. Christian Apologist, probably later than 200. His *Octavius* is written in Latin, and seems to borrow from Tertullian. *Octavius* 39.

Montanus, fl. 157. Leader of the Montanist movement. See 314. Quoted by Epiphanius 309-310. See also 211, 315, 319.

Muratorian Fragment, c. 190. Oldest list of accepted New Testament books, written in Rome. Discovered in 1740 by L. A. Muratori. 211.

Narsai, d. 430-503. Professor in the Theological School at Edessa from 457 to 489, and after that at Nisibin. He was a Syriac poet, and had strong Nestorian convictions.

Discourses 298.

New Testament.

7, 88. For other references, see *Index of Bible Verses*.

Nestorius, d. c. 451. Patriarch of Constantinople 428-431, his teaching about the Two Natures of Christ was condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431, and he was exiled to the Egyptian desert, where he died after much hardship. His doctrines were accepted by the Church of the East.

Selections from Fragments 274-277.

See also 87, 114, (261), (264), (267), (281), 301.

Niceta, d. c. 414. Bishop of Remesiana in what is now Roumania from about 370.

Te Deum Laudamus 151.

On the Creed (Explanation Symboli) 319.

Origen, c. 185-c. 254. The greatest of the Apologists. His *Against Celsus* is a long reply (about 600 pages) to an attack on Christianity made half a century earlier (see *Celsus*). It was written after 240. Origen was the first textual critic of the Bible, and an exponent of the allegorical method of interpretation.

Against Celsus (*Contra Celsum*) 1, 2, 48, 52, 57, 63, 70, 98, 107, 109-112, 138, 142, 173, 200, 231, 307, 308.

On First Principles (*De Principiis*) 222-224, 237.

Quoted by Eusebius 221.

On Prayer, 173.

For Origen see also 61, 79, 220, (230), 354.

Papias, early 2nd Century. Disciple of John the Apostle and friend of Polycarp. Bishop of Hierapolis. His writings, quoted by Eusebius, are the earliest account of the writing of Matthew and Mark.

Quoted by Eusebius 209.

Patrick, c. 389-461. British missionary who brought the Gospel to Ireland. His *Confession* is almost certainly genuine, but much of the stories of his life are legendary.

Confession 42.

Pelagius, fl. 400-418. British or Irish monk, who began to teach his distinctive views in Rome about 400, and was in Africa from 410 to 418. His views were condemned by the Church as heretical.

Quoted by Augustine 335.

Philocalian Calendar. Almanack drawn up in 354 for the use of Christians in Rome, containing lists of consuls, prefects, bishops, martyrs, holidays, chronicles of Christian and secular history, and list of 14 regions of Rome.

162.

Philostorgius, c. 368-439. Arian historian. Spent most of his time in Constantinople. His history is one-sided, but he uses excellent source-material.

Ecclesiastical History, epitomised by Photius 36, 38.

Philoxenus of Mabbog, c. 440-523. Leading 'non-Chalcedonian', Bishop of Mabbog (Hierapolis) from 485. 'One of the most learned Syrian theologians', he wrote exclusively in Syriac. Under his direction the New Testament was freshly translated into Syriac (the Philoxene version) in 508. Imprisoned for his 'Monophysite' views in a room where lime was being burned, he died as a result.

Essay on the Trinity and the Incarnation of the Only-Begotten 300.

See also (214).

Photius, c. 810-895, was Patriarch of Constantinople from 853. He was a great scholar, and his *Library* is an encyclopaedic series of extracts and summaries of earlier books, in many volumes. Most of these books, including the work of *Philostorgius* (which see), are available only in Photius's recension.

Library (Bibliotheca) 36, 38.

Pliny the Younger, c. 61-114. Governor of Bithynia from c. 111. His letters to the Emperor Trajan cover 16 months of his governorship. He was a friend of Tacitus.

Epistles 346, 347.

Polycarp, Martyrdom of, 156. A letter written by the Church at Smyrna to other churches giving an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp.

163, 360.

Polycrates, 2nd Century. Bishop of Ephesus, and champion of the Quartodeciman dating of Easter.

Quoted by Eusebius 221.

Pontius, d. c. 260. Deacon of Cyprian. His praise of Cyprian is perhaps too exaggerated.

Life of Cyprian 415.

Priscilla, 2nd Cent. Montanist prophetess.

Quoted by Epiphanius 313.

Ptolemy, fl. c. 180. A Gnostic disciple of Valentinus.

Quoted by Epiphanius 364.

Rabbula, d. 435. Bishop of Edessa from 412 to 435. Strong opponent of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Nestorianism.

Sermon 278.

Records of Eastern Synods. A collection of available records of Synods of the Church of the East, made between 775 and 790, and covering the period 410-775. It has been translated into French by Chabot, and entitled *Synodicon Orientale*. In general the records are first-hand and reliable.

19, 192, 193, 297, 302, 392-395, 397.

Rufinus Tyrannus, c. 345-410. Native of Italy who spent part of his life in Syria, Edessa and Palestine. His account of Frumentius is probably reliable, as it is based on the eyewitness narrative of Edesius.

Ecclesiastical History, 35, 169.

See also (245).

Severus of Antioch, c. 469-538. Non-Chalcedonian theologian, who has been described as 'the leading theologian of the moderate Monophysites'. He was Patriarch of Antioch from 512, but deposed in 518. He wrote in Greek, but his writings were destroyed on orders from the Emperor Justinian, and are mainly preserved in Syriac.

Against John the Grammarian 249, 279, 280, 289, 291.

Against Julian 290, 292-294. *To Nephalius* 287, 288.

The Lover of Truth (Philaethes) 286.

Shila. Patriarch of the East, 505-523. He was a married man, and was later accused of using his office to benefit his relatives.

Quoted by Mashiha-Zakha 428.

See also 17, 22.

Socrates. c. 380—after 439. A lawyer of Constantinople, who wrote a Church History from 305 to 439, which preserves many original documents, and takes an impartial point of view on Church controversies.

Ecclesiastical History 159, 242, 243.

Sozomen, fl. c. 440. A native of Palestine who settled in Constantinople. His History is dependent on Socrates, but he quotes many original documents. He includes much legendary material, but his accounts of persecution in Persia are from reliable sources.

Ecclesiastical History 37, 389, 390.

Strabo, c. 63 B.C.-after 21 A.D. Native of Pontus, who travelled widely, and wrote a *Geography* in 7 B.C., which is largely based on first-hand experience and observation.

Geography 3.

Synod of Dad-Ishu', Acts of. Included in **Records of Eastern Synods** (which see).

Synod of Seleucia, Acts of. Included in **Records of Eastern Synods** (which see).

Tacitus, c. 55-120. Roman historian, governor of Asia under Trajan, and friend of Pliny the Younger. His *Annals* were written in 116.

Annals 344.

T'ang Dynasty, Imperial Rescripts of the (T'ang hui yao). Records of official decisions of the T'ang Emperors of China, completed in 960.

411.

Tatian. Native of Assyria, who became a Christian in Rome some time around 150, probably through Justin Martyr. He went to Edessa, and probably wrote the *Diatessaron* there in Syriac between 152 and 165. About 172 he returned to the East, and became a heretic. His *Address to the Greeks* is an Apology.

Address to the Greeks 78.

See also 10.

Tertullian (c. 160-230). North African lawyer, converted in Rome about 195. He returned to Africa, and settled in Carthage. His *Apology* (197) is full of wit and sarcasm. He was the first great Christian writer in Latin, and coined many theological terms. He became a Montanist in 207.

Apology 92, 96, 102, 106, 136, 140, 143, 152, 172, 177, 349, 414.

Heretics have no Case (*De Praescriptione Haeticorum*) 101.

On Baptism 120, 121.

On the Soldier's Crown, 118, 127, 156, 230.

On the Soul 315.

To His Wife 64, 417.

For Tertullian see also (7).

Theodore of Mopsuestia, c. 360-428. Bishop of Mopsuestia in Cilicia from 392 to 428. Friend of Chrysostom. He was an exponent of the literal method of Biblical interpretation, and a thinker whose views were the real origin of Nestorianism. He is very important in the history of the Church of the East, because his works were translated into Syriac and widely used.

On Galatians 226.

On the Gospel of John 227-229.

On the Nicene Creed 258, 261, 268-272.

Quoted by Severus of Antioch 280.

See also (28), 29, 87, (214), 226, (230), (264), (268), 273, (298), 301, (330).

Theodore, c. 393-c. 458. Bishop of Cyrrhus in Cilicia from 423. Friend of Nestorius, but abandoned Nestorian views before 451. His *History* covers the period 324-428. He was well-informed, probably by refugees, of contemporary persecutions in the Sassanid Empire.

Ecclesiastical History 259, 396.

See also 10, 301.

Theodosius I, Roman Emperor from 379 to 395. His laws are codified in the *Code of Theodosius* (II) of 435, which covers laws from Constantine till then.

Code of Theodosius 368, 369.

For Theodosius I see also 370.

Thomas, Acts of. Syriac apocryphal writing, Gnostic in origin and emphasis, available also in several Greek versions. See Introduction to 23.

Summarised by Farquhar 23.

Thomas, Gospel of. Syriac apocryphal writing, probably Gnostic in origin, available in Greek, Latin, Syriac and Slavonic. 2nd Cent. 263.

Thomas of Marga, 9th Century. Entered Bait Abe as a monk in 832, and was later Bishop of Marga and Metropolitan of Bait Garma. He was Secretary to Abraham, Patriarch of the East, from 837 to 850. His *Book of Governors* (*Liber Superiorum*, also known as *Historia Monastica*), is an account of the Abbots and monks of the Bait Abe monastery. As many of them became Bishops and Patriarchs, the book contains much valuable information.

Book of Governors 21, 167, 170, 184, 407, 423, 429.

Timothy Aleurus, d. 477. Patriarch of Alexandria from 457, but exiled 460-475 for his non-Chalcedonian views.

Quoted by Zechariah the Rhetorician 285.

Trajan. Roman Emperor from 93 to 117. Great warrior. In 106 he added Dacia to the Empire, and in two campaigns he invaded Parthia and captured Seleucia-Ctesiphon temporarily.

Quoted by Pliny 347.

Ulphilas, 4th Cent. First Bishop of the Goths, he was consecrated in 341 in the reign of Constantius, and according to Theodoret, became an Arian or Semi-Arian after 360. He translated most of the Bible into Gothic.

Creed of Ulphilas 260.

See also 38, (39), (54), (259).

Vienne and Lyons, Letter from Christians of, 177. An eyewitness description of the martyrdoms of Vienne and Lyons, in the form of a letter from the Churches there.

Quoted by Eusebius 351.

Vincent of Lerins (d. before 450). Monk on a small island off the south of France. His *Reminder* (*Commonitorium*, *Aid to Memory*) was written about 434, and attempts to formulate principles to distinguish between truth and heresy.

A Reminder 238.

Zechariah the Rhetorician, 6th Cent. Jacobite of Mitylene who wrote *Chronicles* in Greek about 544. It is preserved in a Syriac translation. See introduction to 39. The *Chronicles* are valuable because they quote contemporary documents of the 5th Cent. for the post-Chalcedonian disputes.

Chronicles 285.

Zeno. Byzantine Emperor from 474 to 491. His *Henoticon* (482) was an attempt to steer a middle course between Orthodox and Monophysite views, but pleased neither.

Quoted by Evagrius 296.

INDEX I. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

This Index contains a note of the direct quotations of Scripture verses, and also of a few of the more obvious allusions to Scripture passages or incidents. No attempt has been made to include all the allusions.

Where the verse quoted differs from the Authorised Version or the New English Bible, it is because the writer is quoting from the Septuagint, Vulgate, or Syriac translation available to him.

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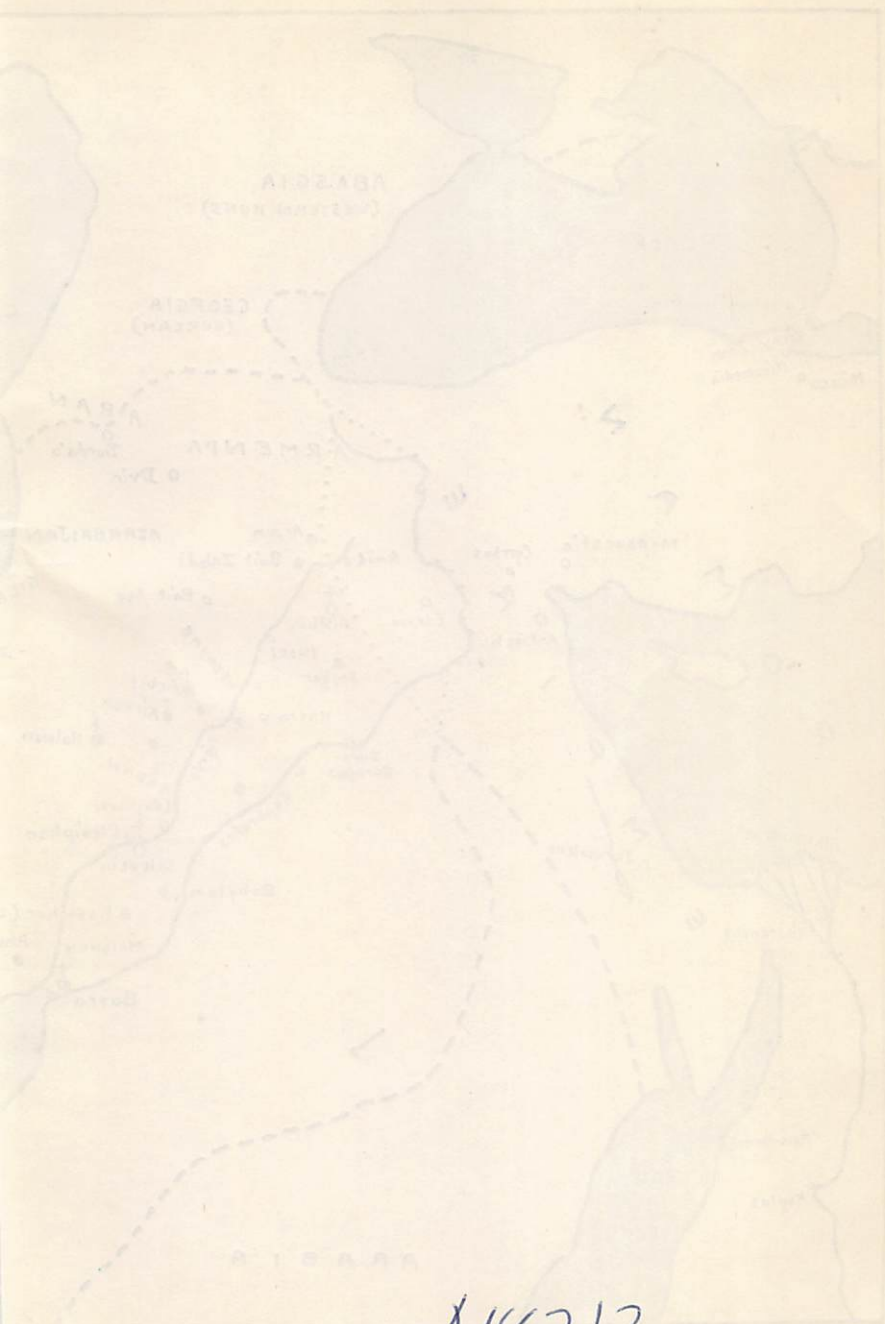
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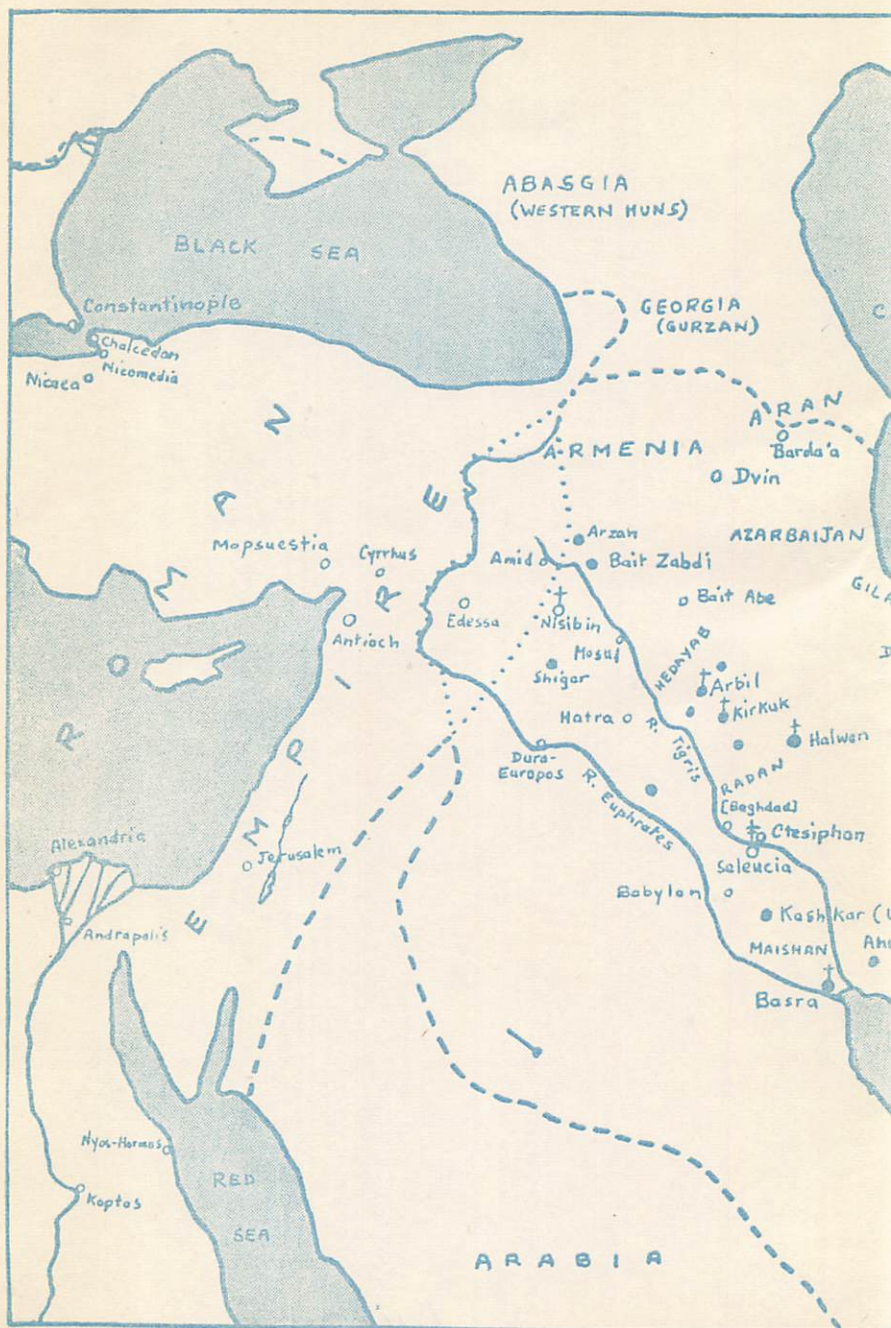
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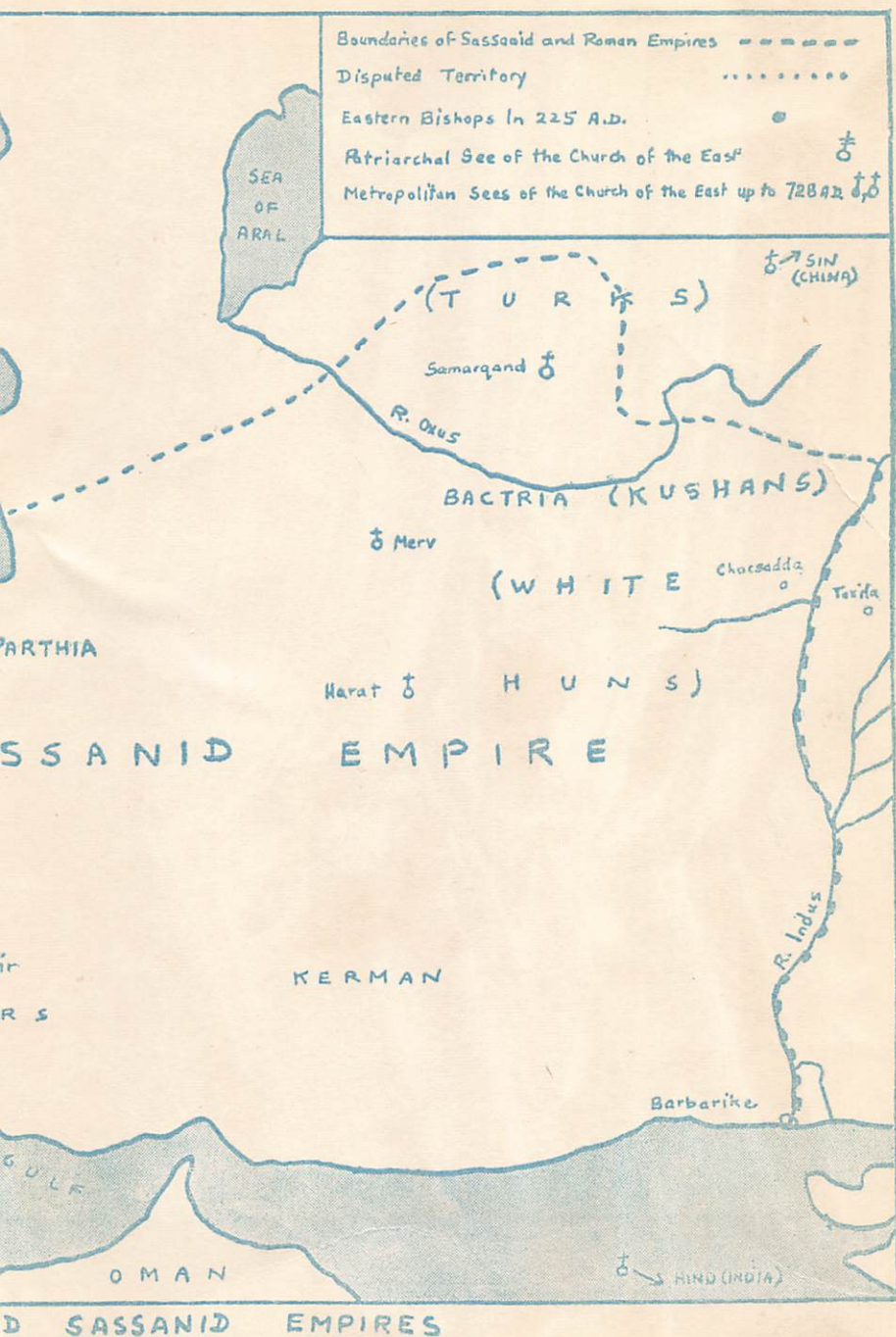
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